

PCTWORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
International Bureau

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁶: C07D 401/04, 403/04, 203/02, 203/22	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 95/30672 (43) International Publication Date: 16 November 1995 (16.11.95)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US95/04911 (22) International Filing Date: 1 May 1995 (01.05.95) (30) Priority Data: 239,097 6 May 1994 (06.05.94) US (71) Applicant: DREXEL UNIVERSITY [US/US]; 32nd and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19104 (US). (72) Inventors: DAVIS, Franklin, A.; 605 Greythorne Road, Wynnewood, PA 19096 (US). ZHOU, Ping; 3601 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19104 (US). REDDY, Gaddampally, Venkat; 4111 Walnut Street, Apartment 407, Philadelphia, PA 19104 (US). (74) Agents: SCHWARZE, William, W. et al.; Panitch Schwarze Jacobs & Nadel P.C., 36th floor, 1601 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 (US).	(81) Designated States: AM, AT, AU, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, HU, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LK, LR, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, TJ, TT, UA, UZ, VN, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG), ARIPO patent (KE, MW, SD, SZ, UG). Published <i>With international search report. Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i>	
(54) Title: AZIRIDINE COMPOUNDS, METHODS OF PREPARATION AND REACTIONS THEREOF		
(57) Abstract <p>Novel N-sulfinyl-2-carboxyaziridine compounds and novel N-hydrogen-2-hydroxymethylaziridine compounds are provided. The asymmetric synthesis of N-sulfinylaziridines is readily accomplished in high diastereomeric purity and good yield by the Darzens-type reaction of the metal enolate of an α-haloester and an enantiopure sulfinimine. Ring-opening of these aziridines affords α-amino acids and the otherwise difficult to prepare <i>syn</i>-β-hydroxy-α-amino acids, both key structural units found in many bioactive materials. The N-sulfinyl radical may be selectively removed from the novel aziridine compounds by treatment with acid or base. Alternatively, the N-sulfinyl radical may be oxidized to provide the corresponding N-sulfonyl-aziridine, or reduced to form the corresponding 1H-2-hydroxymethylaziridine, either of which may subsequently be ring-opened to provide precursors to bioactive compounds.</p>		

FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

AT	Austria	GB	United Kingdom	MR	Mauritania
AU	Australia	GE	Georgia	MW	Malawi
BB	Barbados	GN	Guinea	NE	Niger
BE	Belgium	GR	Greece	NL	Netherlands
BF	Burkina Faso	HU	Hungary	NO	Norway
BG	Bulgaria	IE	Ireland	NZ	New Zealand
BJ	Benin	IT	Italy	PL	Poland
BR	Brazil	JP	Japan	PT	Portugal
BY	Belarus	KE	Kenya	RO	Romania
CA	Canada	KG	Kyrgyzstan	RU	Russian Federation
CF	Central African Republic	KP	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	SD	Sudan
CG	Congo	KR	Republic of Korea	SE	Sweden
CH	Switzerland	KZ	Kazakhstan	SI	Slovenia
CI	Côte d'Ivoire	LI	Liechtenstein	SK	Slovakia
CM	Cameroon	LK	Sri Lanka	SN	Senegal
CN	China	LU	Luxembourg	TD	Chad
CS	Czechoslovakia	LV	Latvia	TG	Togo
CZ	Czech Republic	MC	Monaco	TJ	Tajikistan
DE	Germany	MD	Republic of Moldova	TT	Trinidad and Tobago
DK	Denmark	MG	Madagascar	UA	Ukraine
ES	Spain	ML	Mali	US	United States of America
FI	Finland	MN	Mongolia	UZ	Uzbekistan
FR	France			VN	Viet Nam
GA	Gabon				

5 Aziridine Compounds,
 Methods of Preparation and Reactions Thereof

Statement of Government Interest

 This invention was made, in part, with Government
10 support awarded by the National Science Foundation and the
 National Institutes of Health.

Field of the Invention

 The invention is directed to heterocyclic organic
15 compounds containing a three-membered hetero ring having two
 carbons and one nitrogen, and more specifically to racemic
 and nonracemic 1-sulfinyl-2-carboxyaziridine compounds, 1-
 sulfinyl-2-(hydroxymethyl)aziridine compounds,
 stereospecific reactions for their preparation, and
20 conditions for their conversion into components of bioactive
 compounds.

Background of the Invention

 The development of synthetic methodology to prepare
25 biologically active compounds is an important area of
 chemical research. Given the chiral nature of most
 biological systems, facile access to optically active
 compounds is of particular interest.

 Unsubstituted N-phenylsulfinylaziridine has been
30 reported in non-optically active form. See, e.g., Anet, F.
 A. L.; Trepka, R. D.; Cram, D. J. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 1967,
 89, 357. Methyl 1-(phenylsulfinyl)-2-aziridinecarboxylate
 has also been reported in non-optically active form. See,
 e.g., Chervin, I. I.; Fomichev, A. A.; Moskalenko, A. S.;
35 Zaichenko, N. L.; Aliev, A. E.; Prosyaniuk, A. V.;

Voznesenskii, V. N.; Kostyanovskii, R. G. *Izv. Akad. Nauk SSSR, Ser. Khim.* 1988, 1110, *Chem. Abstr.* 1989, 110, 56755g.

Enantiopure α -amino acids, syn- and anti- β -hydroxy- α -amino acids, β -substituted- α -amino acids and their derivatives are essential components of many biologically active peptides, aminosugars and antibiotics, and their preparation is therefore of keen interest to manufacturers of such biologically active materials. See, generally, Sunazuka, T.; Nagamitsu, T.; Tanaka, H.; Omura, S.; Sprengeler, P. A.; Smith III, A. B. *Tetrahedron Lett.* 1993, 34, 4447; Savage, I.; Thomas, E. J. *J. Chem. Soc. Chem. Commun.* 1989, 717; Mukaiyama, T.; Miwa, T.; Nakatsuka, T. *Chem. Lett.* 1982, 145; Evans, D. A.; Weber, A. E. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 1986, 108, 6757. An exemplary target of current interest is (-)-N-benzoyl-(2R,3S)-3-phenylisoserine, the C-13 side chain of the remarkable antitumor agent taxol.

Other examples of bioactive materials containing or potentially derived from aziridine 2-carboxylic acids or 1,2-aminoalcohols include the commercially important broad spectrum antibiotics chloramphenicol, thiamphenicol and florfenicol, useful against gram-positive and gram-negative organisms, see, e.g., Tyson, R., *Chem. and Industry* 1988, 118; cromakalim, the smooth muscle relaxant useful for the treatment of asthma and hypertension, see, e.g., Evans, J. M.; Longman, S. D. *Ann. Rep. Med. Chem.* 1991, 26, 73; the diastereoisomers of 3-hydroxyleucine found in naturally occurring peptide antibiotics, see, e.g., Sunazuka, T.; Nagamitsu, T.; Tanaka, H.; Omura, S.; Sprengeler, P. A.; Smith III, A. B. *Tetrahedron Lett.* 1993, 34, 4447; methyl (2R,3R)-1-benzyl-3-hydroxymethyl-2-aziridinecarboxylate, a key intermediate in the synthesis of FK973, active against various transplanted human and murine tumors, see, e.g., Jones, R. J.; Rapoport, H. J. *Org. Chem.* 1990, 55, 1144; and the antitumor mitomycin analogues, see, e.g., Shaw, K. J.; Luly, J. R.; Rapoport, H. J. *Org. Chem.* 1985, 50, 4515.

Synthetic methodology for the preparation of nonracemic aziridine compounds outside the scope of the present invention is known. For example, synthetic and naturally occurring β -hydroxy- α -amino acids are reportedly cyclized to form nonracemic aziridine compounds. See, e.g., Jones, R. J.; Rapoport, H. *J. Org. Chem.* 1990, 55, 1144; Kuyl-Yeheskiely, E.; Lodder, M.; van der Marel, G. A.; van Boom, J. H. *Tetrahedron Lett.* 1992, 33, 3013; and Nakajima, K.; Takai, F.; Tanaka, T.; Okawa, K. *Bull. Chem. Soc. Jpn.* 1978, 51, 1577. The viability of this method for the preparation of a diverse range of optically active aziridine compounds is limited by the scarcity of the β -hydroxy- α -amino acid starting materials.

Other methodology has been reported which provides optically active aziridine compounds only after lengthy, multi-step procedures that often require resolutions and/or separation of diastereomers. See, generally, Legters, J.; Thijs, L.; Zwanenburg, B. *Recl. Trav. Chim. Pays-Bas* 1992, 111, 1; and Evans, D. A.; Faul, M. M.; Bilodeau, M. T.; Anderson, B. A.; Barnes, D. M. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 1993, 115, 5328. For example, ammonia reportedly reacts diastereoselectively with nonracemic α -bromo- α,β -unsaturated esters to form nonracemic aziridine compounds. See, e.g., Lown, J. W.; Itoh, T.; Ono, N. *Can. J. Chem.* 1973, 51, 856; and Ploux, O.; Caruso, M.; Chassaing, G.; Marquet, A. *J. Org. Chem.* 1988, 53, 3154. Oxirane 2-carboxylic esters may reportedly be converted to aziridines. See, e.g., Thijs, L.; Porskamp, J. J. M.; van Loon, A. A. W. M.; Derks, M. P. W.; Feenstra, R. W.; Legters, J.; Zwanenburg, B. *Tetrahedron* 1990, 46, 2611. The enzymatic transesterification of meso-bis(acetoxymethyl)aziridines has been reported to form nonracemic aziridine compounds. See, e.g., Fuji, K.; Kawabata, T.; Kiryu, Y.; Sugiura, Y.; Taga, T.; Miwa, Y. *Tetrahedron Lett.* 1990, 31, 6663.

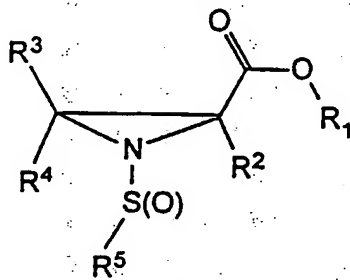
The regio- and stereo-selective ring opening reactions of N-activated *cis*- and *trans*-2-carboxyaziridines have

- previously been reported in the preparation of both protogenic and nonprotogenic amino acids. See, e.g., Baldwin, J. E.; Spivey, A. C.; Schonfield, C. J.; Sweeney, J. B. *Tetrahedron* 1993, 49, 6309; Legters, J.; Willems, J. G. H.; Thijs, L.; Zwanenburg, B. *Recl. Trav. Chim. Pays-Bas* 1992, 111, 59; Shima, I.; Shimazaki, N.; Imai, K.; Hemmi, K.; Hashimoto, M. *Chem. Pharm. Bull.* 1990, 38, 564; Hata, Y.; Watanabe, M. *Tetrahedron* 1987, 43, 3881; Nakajima, K.; Oda, H.; Okawa, K. *Bull. Chem. Soc. Jpn.* 1983, 56, 520;
- 5 Nakajima, K.; Neya, M.; Yamada, S.; Okawa, K. *Bull. Chem. Soc. Jpn.* 1982, 55, 3049; Wade, T. N. *J. Org. Chem.* 1980, 45, 5328; and Williams, R. M. "Synthesis of Optically Active α -Amino Acids," Pergamon Press, New York 1989.
- 10

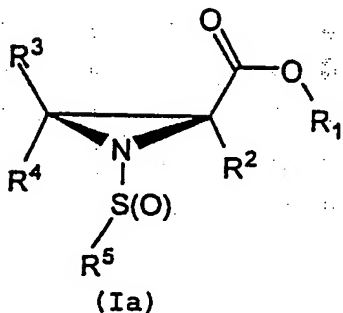
- The preparation of N-sulfonylaziridines has proven to
- 15 be non-trivial according to methods recognized in the art. See, e.g., Legters, J.; Thijs, L.; Zwanenburg, B. *Recl. Trav. Chim. Pays-Bas* 1992, 111, 16.

Summary of the Invention

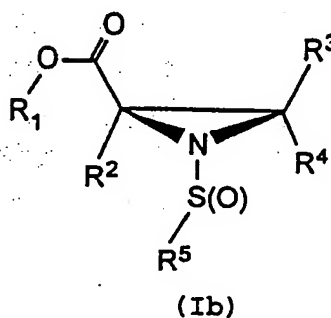
One aspect of the invention is a 2-carboxy-1-sulfinylaziridine compound of general formula (I), including the optically active isomers (Ia) or (Ib), and the salts thereof



(I)



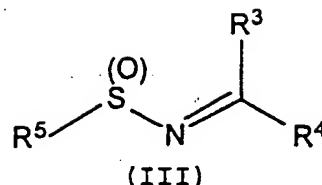
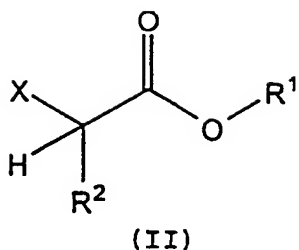
(Ia)



(Ib)

wherein R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 and R^5 are independently selected from the group of radicals consisting of hydrogen and hydrocarbon radicals, wherein each of said hydrocarbon radicals independently has from 1 to 40 carbon atoms, 0-40 halogen atoms, and 0-10 heteroatoms selected from the group consisting of boron, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorous, silicon and selenium, with the proviso that R^3 and R^4 are not simultaneously hydrogen, and S(O) represents a sulfinyl group in either racemic or optically enriched form.

Another aspect of the invention is a process for preparing 2-carboxy-1-sulfinylaziridine compounds of general formula (I), including the isomers (Ia) or (Ib), comprising reacting a compound of formula (II) with base to form a reactive intermediate, and then reacting the reactive intermediate with a compound of formula (III), wherein the compounds of formulas (II) and (III) have the structures,



wherein X is a leaving group including halogen and sulfonate esters such as mesylate and tosylate, and R¹, R², R³, R⁴ and R⁵ are as defined for compounds of formula (I), and S(O) represents a sulfinyl group in either racemic or optically enriched form.

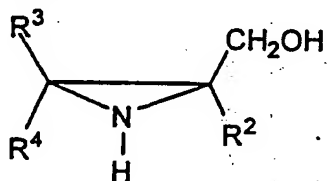
Another aspect of the invention is a process comprising treating a 2-carboxy-1-sulfinylaziridine compound of general formula (I), including the isomers (Ia) or (Ib), with acid or base. Treatment of a 2-carboxy-1-sulfinyl-aziridine compound of general formula (I), including the optical isomers (Ia) or (Ib), with acid or base, provides the corresponding N-hydrogen aziridine and/or, by ring-opening, a 1,2-aminoalcohol, in a product ratio determined by the reaction conditions. The product(s) are useful precursors to bioactive compounds.

Another aspect of the invention is a process comprising treating a 2-carboxy-1-sulfinylaziridine compound of general formula (I), including the isomers (Ia) or (Ib), with an oxidizing agent. Treatment of a 2-carboxy-1-sulfinylaziridine compound of general formula (I), including the isomers (Ia) or (Ib), with an oxidizing agent, provides the corresponding 2-carboxy-1-sulfonylaziridine compound, where said 2-carboxy-1-sulfonylaziridine compound is a useful precursor to bioactive compounds.

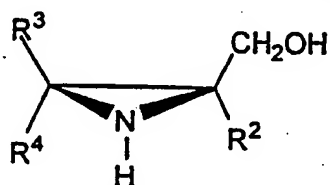
Another aspect of the invention is a process comprising treating a 2-carboxy-1-sulfinylaziridine compound of general formula (I), including the isomers (Ia) or (Ib), with a reducing agent. Treatment of a 2-carboxy-1-sulfinyl-aziridine compound of general formula (I), including the

optical isomers (Ia) or (Ib), with a reducing agent, provides the corresponding 2-hydroxymethyl-1H-aziridine compound, where said 2-hydroxymethyl-1H-aziridine compound is a useful precursor to bioactive compounds.

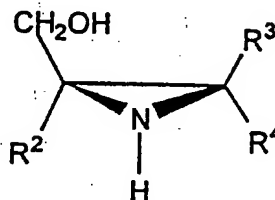
Another aspect of the invention is a 2-hydroxymethyl-1H-aziridine compound of general formula (VII), including the optical isomers (VIIa) or (VIIb),



(VII)



(VIIa)

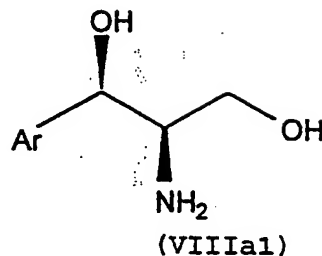
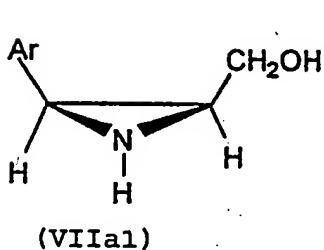
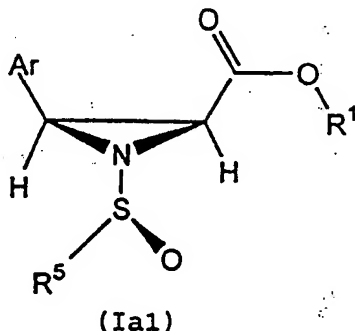


(VIIb)

wherein R^2 , R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from the group of radicals consisting of hydrogen and hydrocarbon radicals, wherein each of said hydrocarbon radicals independently has from 1 to 40 carbon atoms, 0-40 halogen atoms, and 0-10 heteroatoms selected from the consisting of boron, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorous, silicon and selenium, with the proviso that when R^2 is hydrogen, neither R^3 nor R^4 is hydrogen.

Another aspect of the invention is a method for synthesizing florfenicol, thiamphenicol or chloramphenicol comprising the steps of reacting a 2-carboxy-1-sulfinylaziridine compound of formula (Ia1) with a reducing agent to provide a 2-(hydroxymethyl)aziridine compound of formula (VIIa1), and treating the compound of formula (VIIa1) with acid or base to provide an aminoalcohol compound of formula (VIIIa1), and converting a compound of formula (VIIIa1) to florfenicol, thiamphenicol or

chloramphenicol, wherein the compounds of formulas (Ia1), (VIIa1) and (VIIIa1) have the formulas



- 10 wherein Ar represents *para*-CH₃S(=O)₂-C₆H₄- or a precursor thereof, e.g., *para*-CH₃S(=O)-C₆H₄- and *para*-CH₃-S-C₆H₄-, when either florfenicol or thiamphenicol is being synthesized, and Ar represents *para*-NO₂-C₆H₄- or a precursor thereof when chloramphenicol is being synthesized, and R¹ and R⁵ are as defined for compounds of formula (I).

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

- The present invention is directed to novel 2-carboxy-1-sulfinylaziridine compounds of general formula (I), including the optical isomers (Ia) or (Ib), having substituents R¹, R², R³, R⁴ and R⁵. Each of R¹, R², R³, R⁴ and R⁵ in compounds of formula (I), collectively referred to herein as the "R" groups of the invention, is independently either hydrogen or a hydrocarbon radical, where the latter is also known as a hydrocarbyl group. The expression hydrocarbon radical is intended to mean a stable atomic

grouping held together as a discrete unit by nonionic bonding, where the atomic grouping includes both carbon and hydrogen atoms, and may optionally include one or more boron, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorous, silicon and/or selenium atoms. Each hydrocarbyl group present in the aziridine compound of formula (I) may independently have from 1 to 40 carbon atoms, from 0 to 40 halogen atoms and from 0 to 10 heteroatoms selected from the group consisting of boron, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorous, silicon and selenium.

The expression "nonionic bonding" is intended to include covalent bonding, wherein electrons are shared between two atoms so as to form a bond between the atoms, and where no net charge resides on either of the bonding atoms, as occurs in ionic bonding. The term covalent bonding is intended to include both polar and nonpolar covalent bonding, where polar covalent bonding is present, for example, in a C-F bond where the electrons are not shared equally by the two bonded atoms.

While the bond between a carbon and a hydrogen atom of the hydrocarbyl radicals of the invention will always be a single bond (two shared electrons), the bond between any two carbon atoms may be either a single bond, a double bond (four shared electrons), a triple bond (six shared electrons) or a normalized bond, where normalized bonds are recognized as those bonds that join the carbons of, for example, benzene.

The carbon atoms of a hydrocarbyl group of the invention may be joined together to form acyclic or alicyclic atomic groupings, where the later may be aliphatic or aromatic. Exemplary arrangements of atomic groupings of aliphatic carbon atoms in an acyclic arrangement include methane (C₁), ethane (C₂), propane (C₃), butane (C₄), pentane (C₅), etc., where for convenience the names are given for the saturated arrangement of carbon atoms only.

It should be understood that both straight chain as well as branched atomic arrangements are possible for the "R" groups of the invention. However, it will be again mentioned that the bond between any two carbon atoms in an acyclic arrangement of said carbon atoms may take the form of a single (saturated) bond, or an unsaturated bond such as a double bond or a triple bond, where such atomic groupings are also commonly known as alkyl, alkenyl and alkynyl groups, respectively. Thus, included within, for example, the butane (C₄) atomic grouping of carbon atoms according to the invention are the straight-chain fully saturated n-butane group, the straight-chain unsaturated groups 1-butenyl, 2-butenyl, 3-butenyl, 1,3-butadienyl, 1-butyne, 2-butyne, 3-butyne, 1,3-butadiynyl, the branched-chain fully saturated groups *sec*-butyl, *iso*-butyl and *t*-butyl, as well as the branched-chain unsaturated groups 1-methylenepropyl, 1-methyl-1-propenyl, 1-methyl-2-propenyl, 2-methyl-1-propenyl and 2-methyl-2-propenyl. Only stable arrangements of atomic groupings are contemplated for the R groups of the invention.

Exemplary arrangements of atomic groupings of aliphatic and aromatic carbon atoms in an alicyclic arrangement include cyclopropane (C₃), cyclobutane (C₄), cyclopentane (C₅), cyclohexane (C₆) etc. where for convenience, the names are given for the saturated monocyclic arrangement of carbon atoms only. Partially or fully unsaturated rings of the indicated carbon number are also included within the scope of the R groups of the invention, as well as polycyclic arrangements. Such monocyclic arrangements are commonly known as cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, cycloalkynyl and aryl. Thus, using cyclohexane (C₆) as an example, the R groups of the invention include the fully saturated cyclohexyl group, and the partially unsaturated 1-cyclohexenyl, 2-cyclohexenyl, 3-cyclohexenyl, 1,3-cyclohexadienyl, 1,4-cyclohexadienyl, 1,5-cyclohexadienyl, 2,4-cyclohexadienyl

and 2,5-cyclohexadienyl groups. In the case of a C-6 ring, the fully unsaturated ring is phenyl, an aromatic ring, which is also included within the scope of the R groups of the invention.

5 The term polycyclic arrangement refers to two or more rings joined together in a fused, spiro or bridged fashion. Two rings joined together in a fused fashion are distinguished by sharing a bond, as for example, in decalin or a steroid such as cholesterol. Two rings joined together
10 in a spiro fashion are distinguished by sharing a single atom, as for example, in spiropentane. Rings joined together in bridged fashion may be bicyclic, i.e., have two bridgehead atoms, or tricyclic, i.e., have three bridgehead atoms, etc. Adamantyl is an exemplary bridged ring system
15 according to the invention. 1,7,7-Trimethylbicyclo[2.2.1]heptyl is an exemplary alkyl substituted bicyclic bridged ring system according to the invention.

The "R" groups of the invention may contain one or more
20 of the above atomic groupings. Thus, an "R" group may comprise one or more acyclic or alicyclic atomic groupings, which may be aliphatic or aromatic, and which are joined together by nonionic bonding. An example of an "R" group according to the invention having both an aromatic group and
25 a alicyclic group is the toluene radical, also known as tolyl, formed by the nonionic bonding of a phenyl group to a methyl group.

Each "R" group of the invention may optionally and independently contain up to 10 heteroatoms selected from the
30 group consisting of boron, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorous, silicon and selenium. When a heteroatom is present as part of an "R" group of the invention, such heteroatom may be part of the following atomic groups, which are exemplary and not intended to be limiting: acetal, acid
35 chloride, alcohol, aldehyde, alkoxy, alkylthio, arylthio, amide, amine (primary, secondary and tertiary), amino,

anhydride, aryloxy, azido, azino, azo, azoxy, boro, carbamido, carbamoyl, carbamyl, carbazoyl, carbonyl, carboxamide, carboxy, carboxylic acid, cyanamido, cyanoto, cyano, cycloalkoxy, diazo, diazoamino, disilanyl, 5 disiloxanoxy, disulfinyl, dissulfide, dithio, ester, ether, formamido, formylamino, formyl, guanadino, guanyl, hydrazino, hydrazo, hydroperoxy, hydroxamino, hydroxy or hydroxyl, imide, imine, imino, iodoso, isocyanato, isocyano, isonitroso, isothiocyanato, isothiocyano, ketal, ketone, 10 lactam, lactone, mercapto, nitramino, nitrile, nitro, nitrosamino, nitrosimino, nitroso, oxamido, oxime, oxo, peroxide, phosphino, phosphinyl, phospho, phosphono, selenyl, silyl, silylene, sulfamino, sulfamyl, sulfeno, sulhydryl, sulfide, sulfinyl, sulfo, sulfonamide, sulfonic 15 acid, sulfonyl, sulfonyl halide, thioacetal, thioaldehyde, thiocarbamyl, thiocarbonyl, thiocarboxy, thiocyanato, thioketal, thiol, thioester, thionyl, ureido, and urethane. Furthermore, any of the aforementioned heteroatom-containing functional groups may be part of an acyclic or alicyclic, 20 aromatic or aliphatic atomic arrangement.

Each "R" group of the invention may independently contain up to 40 halogen atoms, where the halogen atom at each occurrence is independently selected from the group consisting of fluoro, chloro, bromo and iodo. Thus, the "R" 25 groups of the invention may be or may contain the trifluoromethyl, chloromethyl, pentabromophenyl or iodomethyl groups.

When the carbon atoms join together to form one or more rings, one or more of the carbon atoms may be replaced with 30 a heteroatom selected from the group consisting of boron, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorous, silicon and selenium. Examples of nitrogen containing rings include acridine, imidazole, indole, indoline, naphthyridine, piperidine, piperazine, pteridine, pyrazine, pyrazole, pyridine, 35 pyrrole, pyrrolidine, 1,4,7-triazacyclononane, 1,5,9-triazacyclododecane, triazole, triazine, 1H-1,2,3-

triazolo[4,5-b]pyridine, 1,2,4-triazolo[1,5-a]pyrimidine, s-triazolo[4,3-a]quinoline and fully or partially saturated derivatives thereof.

Examples of oxygen containing rings include furan, oxirane and tetrahydrofuran. Examples of sulfur containing rings include tetrahydrothiophene and thiophene.

Examples of rings containing nitrogen and sulfur include 2,1,3-benzothiadiazole, benzothiazole, phenothiazine, thiazole and fully or partially saturated derivatives thereof. Examples of rings containing nitrogen and oxygen include benzoxazole, morpholine, oxazoline, phenoxazine, and fully or partially saturated derivatives thereof.

The "S(O)" designation present in structural formulas (I), (Ia) or (Ib), or in any other structural formula provided herein, represents a sulfinyl group in either racemic, optically enriched or optically pure form.

Preferred carboxyaziridine compounds of the invention are those of formula (I), (Ia) or (Ib) wherein R¹, R², R³, R⁴ and R⁵ are independently selected from the group of radicals consisting of hydrogen and hydrocarbon radicals, wherein each of said hydrocarbon radicals independently has from 1 to 40 carbon atoms, 0-40 halogen atoms, and 0-10 heteroatoms selected from the group consisting of boron, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorous, silicon and selenium, with the proviso that R³ and R⁴ are not simultaneously hydrogen, and S(O) represents a sulfinyl group in either racemic or optically enriched form. More preferred are compounds of formula (I), (Ia) or (Ib) wherein the hydrocarbon radical having from 1 to 40 carbon atoms is selected from the group consisting of aliphatic radicals, aromatic radicals and combinations thereof, where an aliphatic radical includes acyclic and alicyclic radicals, where the acyclic radical includes straight- and branched-chain acyclic radicals, where the alicyclic radical includes bicyclic and other polycyclic radicals, and where the

aliphatic or aromatic radical contains 0-10 heteroatoms and 0-40 halogen atoms.

Preferred compounds of the invention have the formula (I), (Ia) or (Ib) wherein R^5 comprises an aromatic radical bonded to the sulfur atom in the $-S(O)-$ group to which R^5 is appended. Exemplary R^5 groups having an aromatic radical bonded to the sulfur atom in the $-S(O)-$ group include phenyl and substituted phenyl, wherein the substitution on phenyl may take the form of a single methyl group in either the ortho-, meta- or para- positions, so as to provide the tolyl radical, with para-tolyl being especially preferred, or may take the form of two or more methyl groups, so as to provide the xylyl radical, or may take the form of two or more alkyl or alkoxy groups having 2-10 carbon atoms and 0-6 heteroatoms selected from the group consisting of boron, nitrogen, sulfur, oxygen, phosphorous, silicon and selenium, including halogenated derivatives thereof. Additional preferred R^5 groups include ortho-, meta- and para-halogenated phenyl, ortho-, meta- and para-nitrophenyl, 1- and 2-naphthyl and 2-, 3-, 4-methoxynaphthyl.

Preferred compounds of the invention have the formula (I), (Ia) or (Ib) wherein each of the "R" groups is independently selected from group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, bicyclo[2.2.1]heptyl, C_1 - C_{10} alkyl, C_1 - C_{10} alkenyl, C_3 - C_{10} cycloalkyl, oxazolidyl, pyridyl, pyrazyl, cholesteryl and diacetone-D-glucose, wherein any selected member may be substituted with 0-7 substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, nitro, carbonyl, C_1 - C_5 alkoxy, C_1 - C_5 alkyl, hydroxy, phenyl, naphthyl, C_1 - C_5 alkylthio, C_1 - C_5 alkylsulfonyl and benzyloxy. More preferred compounds additionally have R^2 and R^4 as hydrogen.

Still more preferred compounds of formula (I), (Ia) or (Ib) are those in which R^1 is C_1 - C_{10} alkyl, R^3 is a member selected from the group consisting of phenyl,

bicyclo[2.2.1]heptyl, C₁-C₅ alkyl and C₁-C₅ alkenyl, and wherein the selected member is substituted with 0-5 substituents selected from the group consisting of C₁-C₅ alkyl, halogen and nitro.

5 Other preferred compounds of the invention have the formula (I), (Ia) or (Ib) wherein R⁵ is an aliphatic radical, such as methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, iso-propyl, n-octyl, benzyl, n-butyl, iso-butyl and tert-butyl. Also included are bicyclic aliphatic radicals bonded to the
10 sulfur atom in the -S(O)- group to which R⁵ is appended. Exemplary R⁵ groups having such a bicyclic aliphatic radical may be derived from camphor, including the chiral camphor-derived auxiliary 3-mercapto-2-(benzyloxy)-1,7,7-trimethylbicyclo[2.2.1]heptane.

15 Still further preferred R⁵ groups include radicals derived from heterocyclic compounds, such as oxazolidonyl, pyridyl, and pyrazyl. Additional R⁵ groups are chiral auxiliaries such as cholesteryl, diacetone-D-glucose, and Evans' oxazolidinones, e.g., 4-benzyl-2-oxazolidinone, 4-methyl-5-phenyl-2-oxazolidinone and 4-isopropyl-2-oxazolidinone (Evans, D. A.; Faul, M. M.; Colombo, L.; Bisaha, J. J.; Clardy, J.; Cherry, D. J. *Am. Chem. Soc.* 1992, 114, 5977. Marino, J. P.; Bogdan, S.; Kimura, K. J. *Am. Chem. Soc.* 1992, 114, 5566).

25 Further preferred compounds of the invention have the formula (I), (Ia) or (Ib) wherein at least one of R², R³ or R⁴ is hydrogen.

Additional preferred compounds are those wherein either R³ or R⁴ is hydrogen and the other of R⁴ or R³ is an
30 aliphatic radical having 1 to 40 carbon atoms optionally containing 0-10 heteroatoms and 0-40 halogen atoms. Still further preferred are compounds which additionally have R² as hydrogen.

Additional further preferred compounds of the invention
35 have the formula (I), (Ia) or (Ib) wherein either R³ or R⁴

is hydrogen and the other of R^4 or R^3 is an aromatic radical optionally substituted with 0-5 C_1 - C_8 aliphatic radicals, where the aliphatic radical and aromatic radical can together contain 0-10 heteroatoms and 0-40 halogen atoms.

5 Still further preferred are compounds which additionally have R^2 as hydrogen.

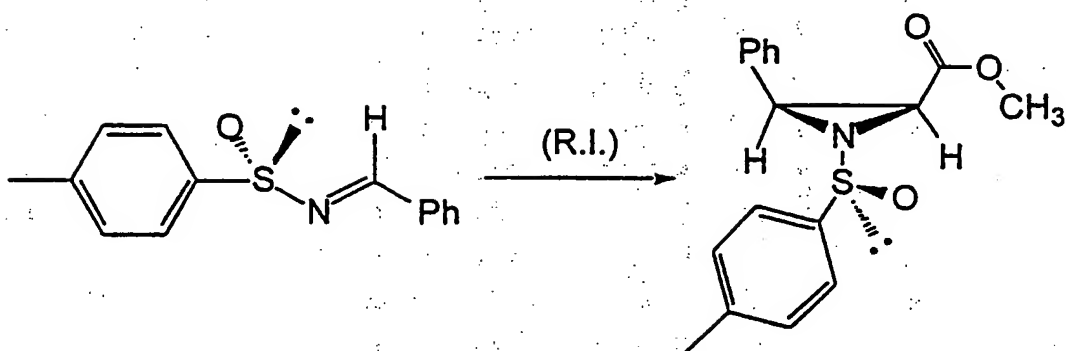
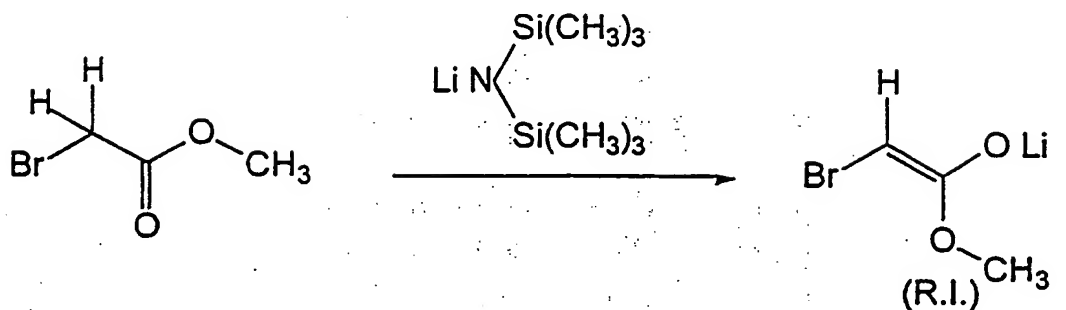
Yet more preferred compounds according to the invention have the formula (I), (Ia) or (Ib) wherein R^1 is C_1 - C_4 aliphatic, R^2 and R^4 are hydrogen, R^3 is selected from the group of radicals consisting of C_1 - C_5 aliphatic, C_6 aromatic and combinations thereof containing 0-3 heteroatoms, including alkyl-substituted aryls, and R^5 is C_6 aromatic substituted with 0-2 C_1 - C_3 aliphatic, including tolyl.

Compounds of formula (I) having both R^3 and R^4 as hydrogen are not included among the compounds of the invention. Compounds of formula (I) having both R^3 and R^4 as hydrogen are non-chiral at the 3-position of the aziridine ring, and will ring open under the reaction conditions of the invention to afford a non-chiral carbon atom β to the carboxy radical.

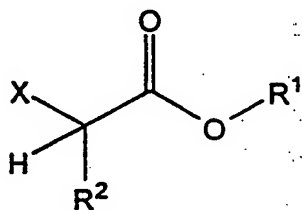
Included within the scope of the inventive carboxyaziridine compounds of formula (I) are the salts thereof, including the aziridinium salts formed by treatment of a compound of formula (I), (Ia) or (Ib) with a protic acid, such as hydrochloric acid and the like.

Compounds of formula (I) can be prepared according to the method outlined in Scheme 1. A compound of formula (II), e.g., methyl α -bromoacetate, is reacted with strong base, e.g., lithium bis(trimethylsilyl)amide, to form a reactive intermediate (R.I.), e.g., the lithium enolate of the compound of formula (II). The reactive intermediate is reacted with a compound of formula (III), e.g., (S)-(+)-N-benzylidene-p-toluenesulfinimine, whereupon a compound of formula (I), e.g., (2S,3S)-(+)-N-p-toluenesulfinyl-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine, is formed.

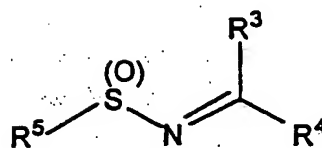
Scheme 1



More generally, compounds of formulas (II) and (III) have the structural formulas,



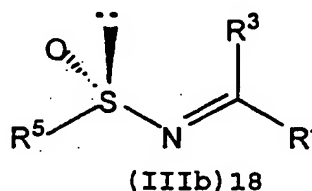
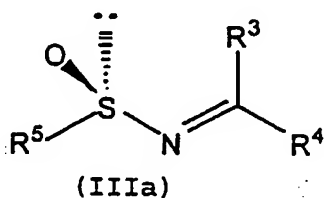
(II)



(III)

wherein X is a leaving group, for example halogen or a sulfonate ester such as mesylate or tosylate, and R¹, R², R³, R⁴ and R⁵ are as defined for compounds of formula (I) and S(O) represents a sulfinyl group in either racemic or optically enriched form. Compounds of formulas (I) and (III) according to this aspect of the invention may simultaneously have R³ and R⁴ equal to hydrogen.

Preferred compounds of formula (III) have an enantiomerically enriched sulfinyl (-S(O)-) group. See, e.g., Davis, F. A.; Reddy, R. E.; Szewczyk, J. M.; Portonovo, P. S. *Tetrahedron Lett.* 1993, 34, 6229; Yang, T. K.; Chen, R. Y.; Lee, D. S.; Peng, W. S.; Jiang, Y. Z.; Mi, A. Q.; Jong, T. T. *J. Org. Chem.* 1994, 59, 914; and references cited therein for the preparation of such enantiomerically enriched compounds. Preferred compounds of formula (III) are represented by structural formulas (IIIa) or formula (IIIb)



15

The strong base of Scheme 1 is selected from the group of strong bases capable of converting an α -(leaving group)carboxylic ester of formula (II) to the corresponding enolate. Preferred strong bases include lithium, sodium or potassium hydride; lithium, sodium or potassium salts of primary, secondary or tertiary amines such as diisopropylamine and bis(trimethylsilyl)amine; sodium amide; lithium alkyls such as *n*-butyllithium and methyllithium; and metal salts of organic alcohols such as potassium tert-butoxide and sodium ethoxide. Strong bases according to the invention illustrated by Scheme 1 are typically commercially available, from for example, Aldrich Chemical Company, Inc., Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Alternatively, a preferred strong base can be prepared by, for example, treating diisopropylamine with *n*-butyllithium.

30

The preparation of compounds of formula (I) according to Scheme 1 is preferably conducted in an inert solvent, under an inert atmosphere, and at low temperature.

Exemplary inert solvents include, without limitation, 1,4-dioxane, 1,3-dioxolane, diethyl ether, dimethoxyethane, 2-methoxyethylether and tetrahydrofuran. Exemplary inert atmospheres include, without limitation, atmospheres of dry
5 nitrogen or dry argon. Low temperatures according to the invention illustrated by Scheme 1 include temperatures of about -78 °C to about 0 °C. In general, the reaction conditions are chosen so as to provide the desired enolate geometry, which will be either the "E" or "Z" geometry.

10 Methods to affirmatively achieve either an "E" or "Z" enolate geometry, starting from α -(leaving group)esters of formula (II), have recently become well-known in the art.

The compounds of formula (II) and (III) are preferably contacted together in a molar ratio of about 2:1 in order to
15 form the aziridine compounds of formula (I) according to Scheme 1. The compound of formula (II) is preferably present in excess because typically it is relatively inexpensive, and the reaction conditions are chosen so as to optimize the incorporation of a compound of formula (III)
20 into an aziridine compound of formula (I). In instances where the compound of formula (II) is more precious, the reaction conditions comprise an excess molar equivalent of the compound of formula (III). In practice, a wide range of molar ratios can be employed, including ratios of less than
25 0.1:1 to greater than 10:1, where the ratio refers to the moles of formula (II) compound to moles of formula (III) compound, respectively.

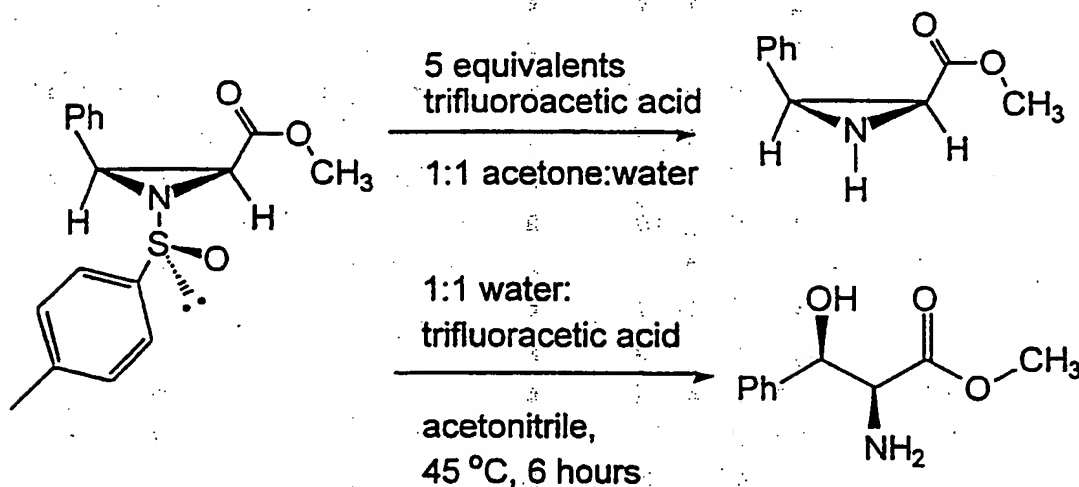
After the compound of formula (I) has been prepared as illustrated in Scheme 1, it may be isolated according to
30 methods well-known in the art. For example, the reaction mixture may be quenched by the addition of water. The solvent(s) may then be removed by distillation. The compound of formula (I) may be obtained in purified form by elution through silica gel, e.g., by flash chromatography or
35 high pressure liquid chromatography.

The preparation of the aziridine compounds of formula (I) according to the method illustrated by Scheme 1 is particularly advantageous because of the ease with which aziridine compounds of formula (I) can be prepared with high diastereomeric excesses. This highly desirable result is primarily the consequence of two factors. First, the sulfinimines of formula (III) having exclusively, or nearly exclusively, either the (*S*) or (*R*) configuration at the sulfinimine sulfur are available according to known methodology. See, e.g., Davis, F. A.; Reddy, R. E.; Szewczyk, J. M.; Portonovo, P.S. *Tetrahedron Lett.* 1993, 34, 6229 and Yang, T.K.; Chen, R.Y.; Lee, D.S.; Peng, W.S.; Jiang, Y.Z.; Mi, A.Q.; Jong, T.T. *J. Org. Chem.* 1994, 59, 914. Second, the aziridine-forming reaction has been discovered to proceed with high diastereoselectivity, so that the sterically-bulkier radical between R³ and R⁴ is generally found exclusively in the *syn*- position relative to the carboxy radical of the aziridine ring when formed. Therefore, by judiciously choosing the desired antipode of the formula (III) compound and the substitution pattern of the formula (II) compound, an aziridine compound of formula (I) can be obtained not only in high yield but also in high diastereomeric excess. The reaction of Scheme 1 can be used to prepare aziridine compounds from both enolizable and nonenolizable sulfinimines. The reaction of Scheme 1 is particularly preferred for the preparation of *cis*-N-(*p*-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxyaziridines: when either R³ or R⁴ is hydrogen, the *cis*-aziridine forms almost exclusively.

Another aspect of the invention comprises the reaction of compounds of formula (I) with acid or base. The compounds of formulas (I), (Ia) and (Ib) according to this aspect of the invention applies to compounds including those wherein R³ and R⁴ are simultaneously hydrogen. As illustrated in Scheme 2, treatment of compounds of formula (Ia), e.g., (2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -N-(*p*-toluenesulfinyl)-2-

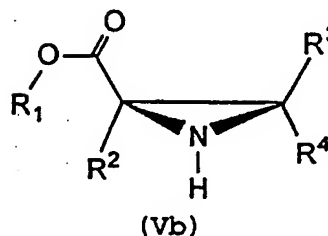
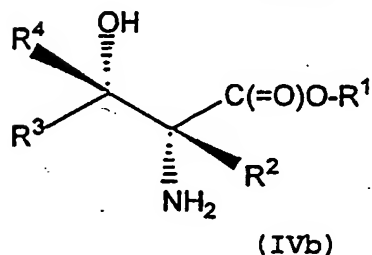
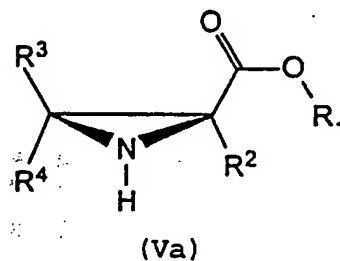
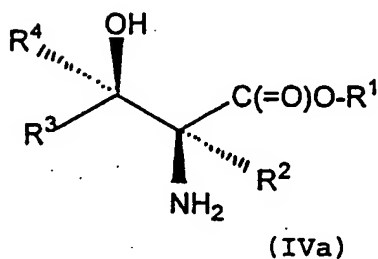
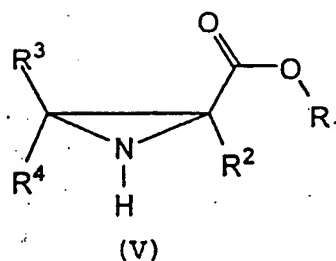
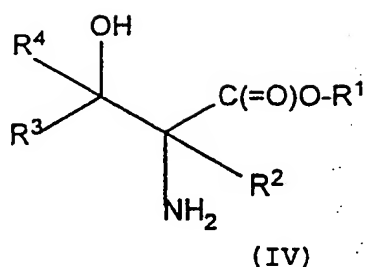
carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine, with acid or base, e.g., trifluoroacetic acid, can provide an N-hydrogen aziridine compound of formula (Va), e.g., methyl (2*S*,3*S*)-(+)-3-phenyl-1*H*-aziridine-2-carboxylate, or a ring-opened β -hydroxy- α -amino acid compound of formula (IVa), e.g., methyl (2*S*,3*R*)-(+)-2-amino-3-hydroxy-3-phenylpropionate.

Scheme 2



10 In more general terms, compounds of formula (I) will react with acid or base to provide compounds of formula (IV) and/or (V), while the optical isomers of the compound of formula (I), i.e., compounds of formulas (Ia) or (Ib), will react with acid or base to provide the optically active ring
15 opened compounds of formula (IVa) or (IVb), respectively, or the 1*H*-aziridine derivatives of formula (Va) or (Vb), respectively, where compounds of formula (IV), (IVa), (IVb), (V), (Va) and (Vb) are represented by the structural formulas:

20



Depending on the reaction conditions chosen, the hydroxyl group of the amino group of the compounds of formula (IV), (IVa) or (IVb) may be converted in situ to a halogen or an ester, in the case of the hydroxyl group, or to a substituted amine.

Exemplary acids include, without limitation, trifluoroacetic acid, hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, formic acid, acetic acid, C₁-C₁₀ alkyl- and alkylaryl-sulfonic acids such as methanesulfonic and camphorsulfonic acid, C₆-C₁₅ aryl- and arylalkyl-sulfonic acids such as para-toluenesulfonic acid, and acidic ion exchange resins such as Amberlite® IR-120(plus). Exemplary bases include, without limitation, lithium hydroxide, sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, ammonium hydroxide, amines including primary, secondary and tertiary amines, tetrabutylammonium

hydroxide, and basic ion exchange resins such as Amberlite® IR-400(Cl).

The enantioselective reactions illustrated in Scheme 2 may be conducted under a wide range of reaction conditions. The reactions may or may not be run under an inert atmosphere of nitrogen or argon. The reaction temperature can range from below room temperature, for example 0 °C, to above room temperature, for example, 70 °C. The reaction is preferably run in an appropriate solvent, where exemplary solvents include, without limitation, acetonitrile, acetone, water and mixtures thereof.

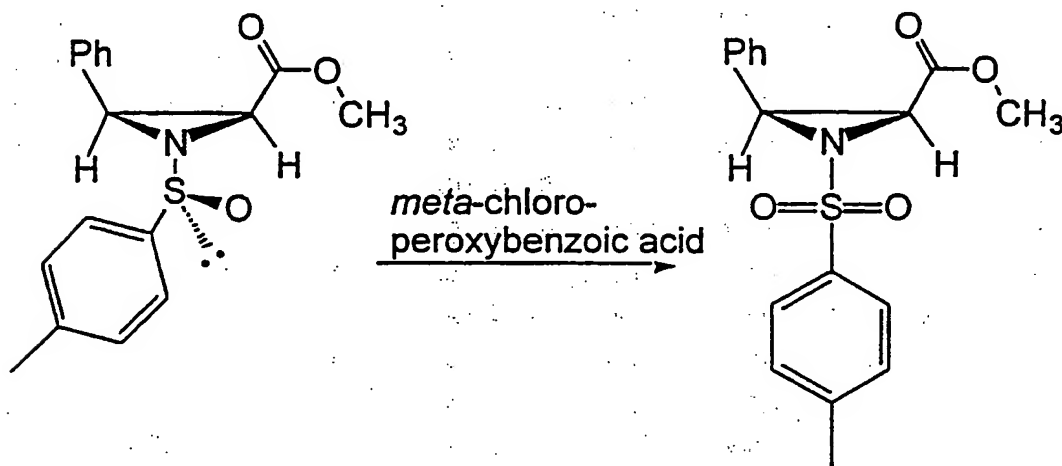
Whether the ring-opened compound or the N-hydrogen aziridine compound predominates upon treatment of a compound of formula (I) with acid or base depends on a number of factors. Those factors include the amount and identity of the acid or base, the solvent(s) in which the reaction is conducted, the temperature of the reaction and the identity of the compound of formula (I). It is generally observed that ring-opened β -hydroxy- α -amino acid compounds are favored when the reaction is run with about 50% aqueous trifluoroacetic acid in acetonitrile at a temperature of about 45 °C. The conversion of a compound of formula (I) to the corresponding N-hydrogen aziridine is generally favored under milder condition, e.g., with reaction conditions comprising 5 moles of trifluoroacetic acid (based on moles of the compound of formula (I)) in a solvent consisting of acetone and water (1:1 volume to volume ratio) and at a temperature of about room temperature (i.e., ca. 25 °C) or slightly higher or lower than room temperature.

Yet another aspect of the invention provides a process comprising treating a compound of formula (I), or a non-racemic isomer (Ia) or (Ib), with an oxidizing agent, where a preferred oxidizing agent is meta-chloroperoxybenzoic acid. As shown in Scheme 3, treatment of a compound of formula (I), e.g., (2S,3S)-(+)-N-(p-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine, with an oxidizing agent,

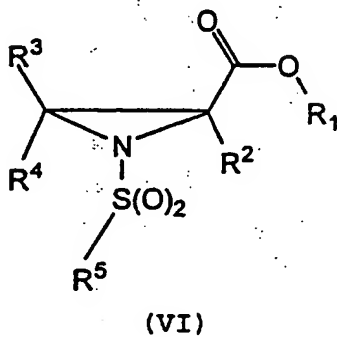
e.g., *meta*-chloroperoxybenzoic acid, provides the corresponding sulfonyl compound of formula (VI), e.g., (2*S*,3*S*)-(+)-*N*-(*p*-toluenesulfonyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine.

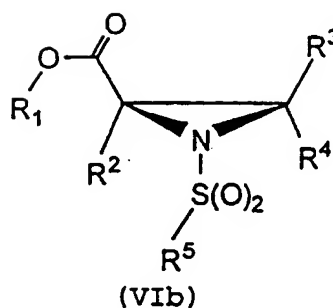
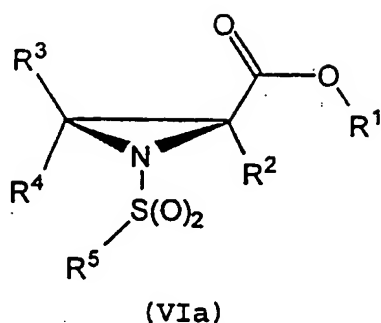
5

Scheme 3



More generally, the oxidation products of formula (VI), including the optically enriched isomers of formulas (VIa) and (VIb) have the formulas,





wherein the "R" groups are as defined for compounds of
 5 formula (I), and R³ and R⁴ may simultaneously be hydrogen.

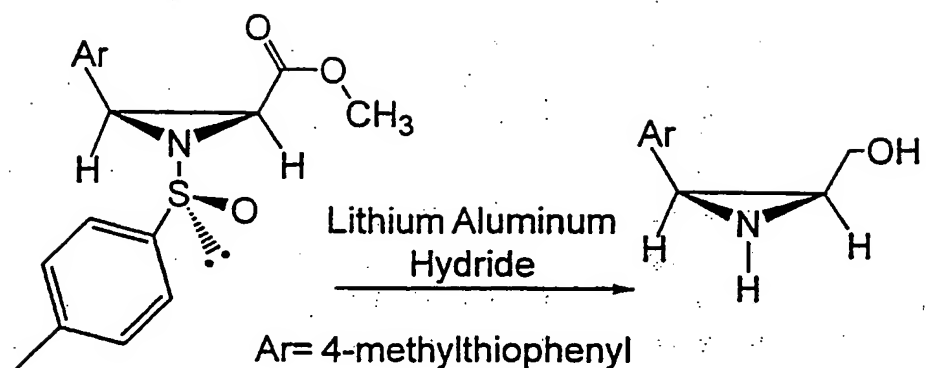
As illustrated by the reaction of Scheme 3, treating a
 sulfinyl compound of formula (I) with an oxidizing agent
 converts the sulfinyl radical to a sulfonyl radical. The
 reaction illustrated by Scheme 3 is a particularly
 10 advantageous approach to preparing N-sulfonated aziridine
 compounds, e.g., N-tosylated aziridine compounds. Such
 sulfonyl compounds are difficult to prepare by other known
 synthetic methodology, and provide ready access to α-amino
 acids and *syn*-β-hydroxy-α-amino acids, both valued
 15 precursors to bioactive compounds. The sulfonated aziridine
 compounds may undergo ring-opening reactions upon treatment
 with, e.g., formic acid or trifluoroacetic acid.

Oxidizing agents capable of converting a sulfoxide to a
 sulfone are preferred in the instant invention. Exemplary
 20 oxidizing agents and conditions include, without limitation,
meta-chloroperoxybenzoic acid, hydrogen peroxide,
 peroxyacetic acid, monoperoxyphthalic acid, magnesium salt
 hydrate, selenium dioxide-hydrogen peroxide, potassium
 peroxymonopersulfate, chromic acid, potassium permanganate,
 25 sodium periodate with catalytic potassium permanganate,
tert-butylhypochlorite and N-sulfonyloxaziridine.

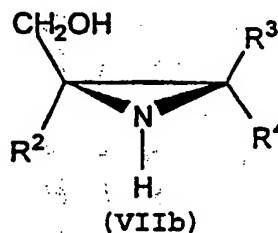
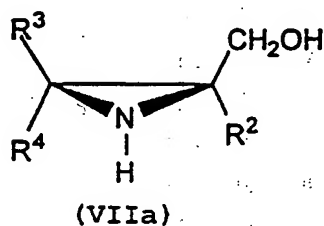
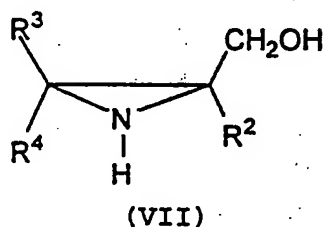
The oxidation reaction according to the invention and
 as illustrated in Scheme 3 may be conducted under a wide
 range of reaction conditions. The reactions may or may not
 30 be run under an inert atmosphere of nitrogen or argon. The

reaction temperature can range from below room temperature, for example 0 °C, to above room temperature, for example, 70 °C. The reaction is preferably run in an appropriate solvent, where exemplary solvents include, without
5 limitation, chloroform, methylene chloride, benzene, toluene, acetic acid and mixtures thereof. The ratio of the moles of oxidizing agent to the moles of formula (I) compound can vary over a wide range, and will depend on the identity of the oxidizing agent. In the case where the
10 oxidizing agent is meta-chloroperoxybenzoic acid, a 50% molar excess of oxidizing agent is satisfactory. The oxidation of organic compounds is well-known in the art, and the skilled artisan will be able to determine satisfactory conditions for the oxidation of the sulfinyl compounds of
15 the invention.

Yet another aspect of the invention provides a process comprising treating a compound of formula (I) or a non-racemic isomer of formula (Ia) or (Ib), with a reducing agent, where a preferred reducing agent is lithium aluminum
20 hydride. As shown in Scheme 4, treatment of a compound of formula (I), e.g., (2S,3S)-N-(p-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-(4-methylthiophenyl)aziridine, with lithium aluminum hydride provides the corresponding 1H-2-(hydroxymethyl)aziridine compound, e.g., (2S,3S)-2-
25 hydroxymethyl-3-(4-methylthiophenyl)-1H-aziridine. This reduction reaction according to the invention is useful in the preparation of bioactive compounds, e.g., florfenicol, thiamphenicol and chloramphenicol, as discussed below.

Scheme 4

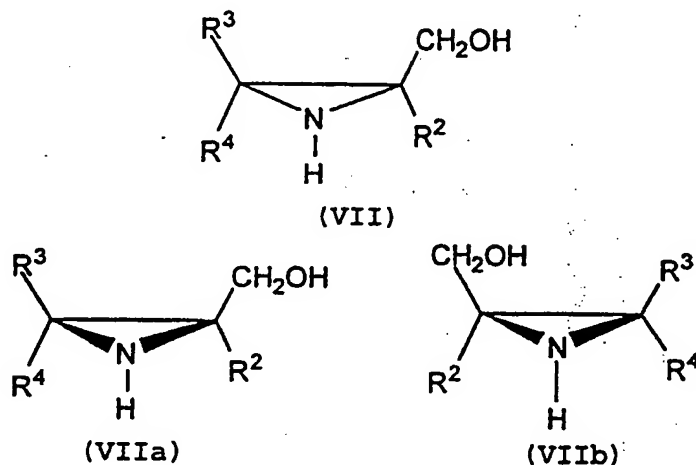
More generally, the reduction products of formula (VII), including the optically active isomers of formula (VIIa) and (VIIb) have the formulas



wherein R^2 , R^3 and R^4 are as defined previously with regard to compounds of formula (I), although compounds wherein R^3 and R^4 are simultaneously hydrogen may be prepared according to the inventive method, starting from compounds of formula (I), (Ia) and (Ib) wherein R^3 and R^4 are simultaneously hydrogen.

The reduction illustrated in Scheme 4 can be conducted under a wide range of reaction conditions. For example, suitable reducing agents include, without limitation, lithium aluminum hydride, sodium borohydride, lithium borohydride, diisobutylaluminum hydride, sodium cyanoborohydride, sodium bis(2-methoxyethoxy)aluminum hydride, calcium borohydride, lithium tri-tert-butoxy hydride, diborane, reducing metal solutions such as lithium/sodium, and hydrogenation techniques. The temperature, solvent(s), atmosphere etc. will need to be tailored to the reducing agent selected, as is well-known to those skilled in the art.

Another aspect of the invention is a 2-hydroxymethyl-1H-aziridine compound of general formula (VII), including the isomers (VIIa) or (VIIb)



wherein R², R³ and R⁴ are as defined previously with regard to compounds of formula (I), with the proviso that when R² is hydrogen, neither R³ nor R⁴ is hydrogen.

Preferred compounds of formula (VII) are those wherein the hydrocarbon radical having from 1 to 40 carbon atoms is selected from the group of radicals consisting of aliphatic radicals, aromatic radicals and combinations thereof, where an aliphatic radical includes acyclic and alicyclic

radicals, where the acyclic radical includes straight- and branched-chain acyclic radicals, where the alicyclic radical includes bicyclic and other polycyclic radicals; and where the aliphatic or aromatic radical contains 0-10 heteroatoms and 0-40 halogen atoms.

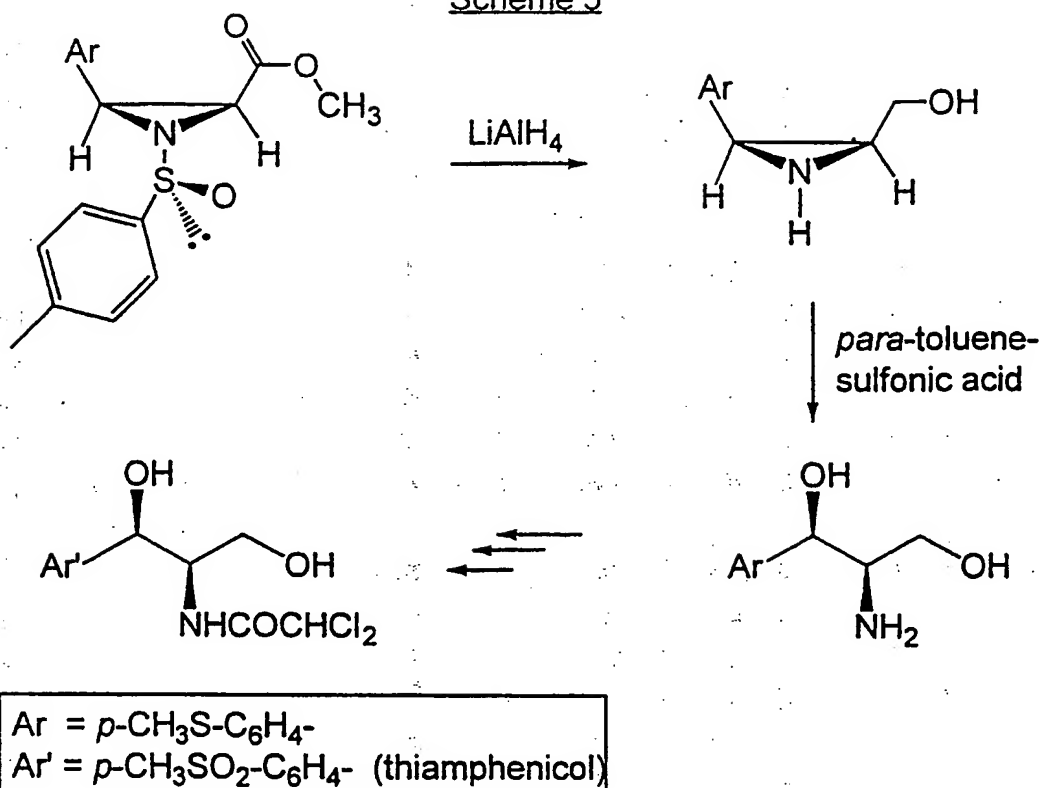
More preferred compounds of formula (VII), (VIIa) or (VIIb) are those wherein R^2 is hydrogen.

Additional preferred compounds of formula (VII), (VIIa) or (VIIb) are those wherein at least one of R^3 or R^4 is an aliphatic radical having 1 to 40 carbon atoms optionally containing 0-10 heteroatoms and 0-40 halogen atoms. Still further preferred are compounds which additionally have R^2 as hydrogen.

Additional further preferred compounds of formula (VII), (VIIa) or (VIIb) are those wherein at least one or R^3 or R^4 is an aromatic radical optionally substituted with 0-5 C_1 - C_8 aliphatic radicals, where the aliphatic radical and aromatic radical can together contain 0-10 heteroatoms and 0-40 halogen atoms. Still further preferred are compounds which additionally have R^2 as hydrogen.

Another aspect of the invention is the application of the inventive compounds and synthetic methodology disclosed herein to the preparation of the broad spectrum antibiotics florfenicol, thiamphenicol and chloramphenicol. A previously known synthetic route to these antibiotics entails an undesirable and wasteful resolution of a racemic mixture. See, Schumacher, D. P.; Clark, J. E.; Murphy, B. L. Fischer, P. A. *J. Org. Chem.* 1990, 55, 5291. In contrast, the synthetic route of the present invention begins with an enantiomerically pure aziridine compound of the invention to provide florfenicol, thiamphenicol or chloramphenicol without a resolution step.

Scheme 5



As illustrated in Scheme 5 for the preparation of thiamphenicol, (2*S*,3*S*)-*N*-(*p*-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-(4-methylthiophenyl)aziridine can be reduced with lithium aluminum hydride to form (2*S*,3*S*)-2-methylalcohol-3-(4-methylthiophenyl)-1*H*-aziridine, which in turn can be treated with acid, such as *para*-toluenesulfonic acid, to provide the ring-opened compound (2*R*,3*R*)-2-amino-1-(4-methylthiophenyl)-1,3-propanediol. The ring-opened compound can be converted to thiamphenicol by synthetic methodology disclosed herein, or can be converted to florfenicol after substitution of the primary hydroxyl group with a fluorine atom.

While the preparation of thiamphenicol as illustrated in Scheme 5 begins with a *N*-(*p*-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy aziridine compound, it will be recognized by one skilled in the art that esters other than the methyl ester, and sulfinyl radicals other than *p*-toluenesulfinyl,

may be employed. Any "R" group as defined for compounds of formula (I) may replace one or both of the methyl or *p*-tolyl groups in the synthesis of thiamphenicol, florfenicol or thiamphenicol according to the method of Scheme 5.

5 The preparation of chloramphenicol may be achieved by synthetic methodology analogous to that shown in Scheme 5, but the starting 1-sulfinylaziridine preferably has a para-nitrophenyl group, or a precursor thereof, instead of the para-methylthiophenyl group, and the reduction is
10 accomplished with a milder reducing agent, e.g., diborane, so as to preserve the nitro group.

 The following examples are provided to better disclose and teach the preparation and reactions of the aziridine compounds of the present invention. They are for
15 illustrative purposes only, and it must be acknowledged that minor variations and changes can be made without materially affecting the spirit and scope of the invention as recited in the claims that follow.

20

Examples

 General Background. IR spectra were recorded on a Perkin-Elmer 1600 FTIR spectrometer using sodium chloride plates for liquids and potassium bromide disks for solids.
25 ¹H NMR and ¹³C NMR spectra were recorded in CDCl₃ solution (unless a different solvent is specified) and referenced to TMS (0.00 ppm) using a Bruker 250 MHz spectrometer. Column chromatography was performed using silica gel, Merck grade 60 (230-400 mesh) purchased from Aldrich Chemical Company.
30 Analytical and preparative thin layer chromatography was performed on pre-coated silica gel plates (250 and 1000 microns) purchased from Analtech Inc. TLC plates were visualized with UV light and/or in an iodine chamber unless noted otherwise. Melting points were recorded on a Mel-
35 Temp™ apparatus and are uncorrected. Optical rotations were measured on a Perkin-Elmer 241 polarimeter. THF was

freshly distilled under nitrogen from a purple solution of sodium and benzophenone. Lithium diisopropylamide, 1M solution in THF, was prepared just prior to its by the addition of 4.0 mL (10.0 mmol) *n*-butyllithium (2.5 M solution in hexanes) to a cooled solution of diisopropylamine (1.47 mL, 10.5 mmol) in THF (5.0 mL) at 0 °C and stirring for 20 min.

The sulfinimine compounds used as starting materials in some of the following experimental descriptions were prepared according to F. A. Davis; R. E. Reddy; J. M. Szewczyk; P. S. Portonovo *Tetrahedron Lett.* 1993, 34, 6229; or F. A. Davis; R. T. Reddy; R. E. Reddy *J. Org. Chem.* 1992, 57, 6387.

Example 1

(2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -*N*-(*p*-Toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine

Into a 50-mL oven-dried two-necked round-bottomed flask equipped with a magnetic stir bar, rubber septum, and argon filled balloon were placed 2.0 mL of 1 M lithium bis(trimethylsilyl)amide (in THF) and 10 mL THF. The solution was cooled to -78 °C, and 0.306 g (2 mmol) methyl α -bromoacetate added via syringe. After stirring for 30 min. at -78 °C, a pre-cooled solution (-78 °C) of 0.243 g (1.0 mmol) of (*S*)-(+) -*N*-benzylidene-*p*-toluenesulfinimine in 10 mL THF was added via cannula over 30 min. The reaction mixture was stirred for 2.5 h at -78 °C, quenched at this temperature with 15 mL H₂O, and diluted with 60 mL ethyl acetate. The solution was washed with 10 mL brine, dried (MgSO₄), filtered and concentrated in vacuo to give a residue containing the titled aziridine. The residue was subjected to flash chromatography (ethyl acetate:*n*-hexane, 2:8) to give the titled compound (0.205 g, 65%) as an oil: *R*_f 0.45 (ethyl acetate:*n*-hexane 2:8); [α]_D²⁰ +51.4° (c 1.5,

CHCl₃); IR (neat): 3031.4, 1754.1, 1596.3, 1204.3, 1074.1
cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 2.43 (s, 3H, CH₃), 3.39 (s, 3H, CH₃),
3.50 (d, J=7.4Hz, 1H, CH), 3.88 (d, J=7.4Hz, 1H, CH), 7.20-
7.50 (m, 7H, aromatic), 7.72 (d, J=8.2Hz, 2H, aromatic); ¹³C
5 NMR (CDCl₃) δ 165.8, 141.9, 140.6, 132.3, 129.5, 128.1,
127.9, 127.6, 125.0, 51.9, 42.1, 34.8, 21.5. Anal. Calcd
for C₁₇H₁₇NO₃S: C, 64.74; H, 5.43. Found: C, 64.72; H,
5.50.

Also isolated was (2*S*,3*R*)-(-)-*N*-(*p*-toluenesulfinyl)-2-
10 carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine (in 6% yield, as a 1:1
syn:anti isomeric mixture with respect to the carbomethoxy
group), which was characterized after oxidation to the
sulfonyl compound: *R*_f 0.2, (ethyl acetate:*n*-hexane 2:8); mp
42-44 °C, (mp 44.2-44.6 °C according to Evans, D. A. et al.
15 *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 1993, 115, 5328); [α]_D²⁰ -29.4° (c 0.92,
CH₂Cl₂); ([α]_D²⁰ +33.1° (c 1.0, CH₂Cl₂) for the (2*R*,3*S*)-
isomer according to Evans, D. A. et al. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*
1993, 115, 5328).

20 Example 2

(2*R*,3*R*)-(-)-*N*-(*p*-Toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenyl-
aziridine

Following the procedure of Example 1, but substituting
25 (*R*)-(-)-(benzylidene)-*p*-toluenesulfinimine (prepared
according to Davis, F. A. et al. *Tet. Lett.* 1993, 34, 6229)
for (*S*)-(+)-(benzylidene)-*p*-toluenesulfinimine, provided the
titled aziridine compound (0.220 g, 70%) as an oil: [α]_D²⁰
-50.8° (c 1.5, CHCl₃), having spectral properties identical
30 to those of the titled compound of Example 1.

Example 3

(2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -N-(*p*-Toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-(4-methoxyphenyl)aziridine

5 Following the procedure of Example 1, but substituting
(*S*)-(+)-(4-methoxybenzylidene)-*p*-toluenesulfinimine for (*S*)-
(+)-(benzylidene)-*p*-toluenesulfinimine, and conducting the
flash chromatography with ethyl acetate:*n*-pentane (ratio
3:7) as the eluent provided the titled compound (74%) as an
10 oil: $[\alpha]_D^{20} +26.4^\circ$ (*c* 1.7, CHCl₃); IR (neat): 3001.3,
1751.7, 1596.2, 1203.6, 1073.6 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 2.25
(s, 3H), 3.23 (s, 3H), 3.28 (d, J=7.3Hz, 1H), 3.62 (s, 3H),
3.66 (d, J=7.3Hz, 1H), 6.69 (d, J=8.8Hz, 2H), 7.16 (d,
J=8.2Hz, 2H), 7.22 (d, J=8.8Hz, 2H), 7.54 (d, J=8.2Hz, 2H);
15 ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 166.0, 159.4, 142.0, 140.6, 129.6, 128.9,
125.1, 124.4, 113.5, 55.2, 52.1, 42.0, 34.9, 21.6. Anal.
Calcd for C₁₈H₁₉NO₄S: C, 62.59; H, 5.54. Found: C, 62.48;
H, 5.28.

20 Example 4

(2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -N-(*p*-Toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-isopropylaziridine

 Following the procedure of Example 1, but substituting
25 (*S*)-(+) -N-isobutylidene-*p*-toluenesulfinimine (prepared
according to Davis F. A. et al. *Tetrahedron Lett.* 1993, 34,
6229 and characterized below) for (*S*)-(+) -N-benzylidene-*p*-
toluenesulfinimine, and conducting the flash chromatography
with ethyl acetate:*n*-pentane (ratio 1:9) as the eluent
30 provided the titled compound (64%) as an oil: $[\alpha]_D^{20}$
+110.7° (*c* 1.2, CHCl₃); IR (neat): 2963.6, 1751.9, 1596.9,
1202.7, 1074.2 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 0.93 (d, J=6.6Hz, 3H),
1.17 (d, J=6.6Hz, 3H), 1.71-1.89 (m 1H), 2.40 (s, 3H), 2.49
(dd, J₁=7.4Hz, J₂=9.8Hz, 1H), 3.21 (d, J=7.3Hz, 1H), 3.61

(s, 3H), 7.29 (d, J=8.1Hz, 2H), 7.62 (d, J=8.1Hz, 2H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3) δ 167.2, 141.5, 140.9, 129.2, 124.5, 51.8, 47.4, 31.6, 26.7, 21.2, 20.4, 19.1. Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{19}\text{NO}_3\text{S}$: C, 59.76; H, 6.81. Found: C, 59.77; H, 6.95.

5 The (S)-(+)-N-isobutylidene-p-toluenesulfinimine was purified by flash chromatography (ethyl acetate:hexane, 2:8) to afford an oil: $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{20} +387.5^\circ$ (c 2.1, CHCl_3); IR (neat): 2956.1, 1731.9, 1618.5, 1096.1 cm^{-1} ; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3) δ 0.98 (d, J=2.9Hz, 3H), 1.01 (d, J=2.8 Hz, 3H), 2.45 (s, 3H), 2.46-2.58 (m, 1H), 7.15 (d, J=8.1Hz, 2H), 7.40 (d, J=8.2Hz, 2H), 7.98 (d, J=4.6Hz, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3) δ 170.9, 141.8, 141.3, 129.5, 124.4, 34.6, 21.4, 18.7. Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{11}\text{H}_{15}\text{NOS}$: C, 63.12; H, 7.22. Found: C, 62.96; H, 7.23.

15 Example 5

(2S,3S)-(+)-N-(p-Toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-((2-phenyl)-(E)-1-ethenyl)aziridine

20 Following the procedure of Example 1, but substituting (S)-(+)-N-(3-phenyl-(E)-2-propenylidene)-p-toluenesulfinimine (prepared according to Davis F. A. et al. *Tetrahedron Lett.* 1993, 34, 6229) for (S)-(+)-N-benzylidene-p-toluenesulfinimine, and conducting the flash
25 chromatography with ethyl acetate:n-pentane (ratio 3:7) provided the titled compound (79%): mp 107-109 $^\circ\text{C}$; $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{20} +107.3^\circ$ (c 4.0, CHCl_3); IR (KBr): 1735.2, 1593.9, 1209.7, 1094.9, 1074.0 cm^{-1} ; ^1H NMR (CHCl_3) δ 2.42 (s, 3H), 3.39-3.50 (m, 2H), 3.61 (s, 3H), 6.23 (dd, $J_1=8.3\text{Hz}$, $J_2=16.0\text{Hz}$, 1H), 6.85 (d, J=16.0Hz, 1H), 7.25-7.42 (m, 7H), 7.64 (d, J=8.1Hz, 2H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3) δ 166.9, 142.0, 140.5, 136.4, 135.6, 129.5, 128.4, 128.1, 126.4, 124.6, 121.2, 52.3, 42.6, 32.7, 21.5. Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{19}\text{NO}_3\text{S}$: C, 66.83; H, 5.61. Found: C, 66.38; H, 5.65.

Example 6

(2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -N-(*p*-Toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-((1-methyl)-1-propenyl)aziridine.

Following the procedure of Example 1, but substituting (*S*)-(+) -N-(2-methyl-(*E*)-2-butenylidene)-*p*-toluenesulfinimine (prepared according to Davis F. A. et al. *Tetrahedron Lett.* 1993, 34, 6229) for (*S*)-(+) -N-benzylidene-*p*-toluenesulfinimine, and conducting the flash chromatography with ethyl acetate:*n*-pentane (ratio 3:7) provided the titled compound (61%) as an oil: $[\alpha]_D^{20} +76.6^\circ$ (c 1.0, CHCl₃); IR (neat): 2951.2, 1753.2, 1596.0, 1201.8, 1176.4, 1098.5, 1074.0 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CHCl₃) δ 1.63 (d, J=0.9Hz, 3H), 1.66 (s, 3H), 2.39 (s, 3H), 3.21-3.30 (m, 2H), 3.54 (s, 3H), 5.57-5.58 (m, 1H), 7.32 (d, J=8.3Hz, 2H), 7.66 (d, J=8.3Hz, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 166.8, 141.8, 140.9, 129.5, 126.8, 125.0, 124.3, 51.9, 44.4, 33.3, 21.3, 13.8, 13.1.

Example 7

Methyl (2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -3-phenyl-1*H*-aziridine-2-carboxylate

Into a 50-mL round-bottomed flask equipped with a magnetic stir bar were placed 0.315 g (1.0 mmol) (2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -N-(*p*-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine (prepared according to Example 1), 5 mL acetone, 5 mL water and 0.4 mL (5 mmol) trifluoroacetic acid. After stirring vigorously for 15 min. at room temperature, the solvent was removed in vacuo. The residue was taken up in 5 mL water, and washed with diethyl ether (2 x 5 mL). The aqueous layer was brought to pH 10 with concentrated NH₄OH and extracted with CH₂Cl₂ (3 x 10 mL). The organic phase was dried (MgSO₄), filtered and concentrated to give a solid which was purified by flash chromatography (ethyl acetate:*n*-hexane, 3:7) to give the titled compound (0.147 g, 83%): mp 58 °C,

(mp 51-57 °C according to Thijs, L. et al. *Tetrahedron* 1990, 46, 2611); $[\alpha]_D^{20} +20.9^\circ$ (c 1.98, ethanol), ($[\alpha]_D^{20} +22.0^\circ$ (c 1.0, ethanol) according to Thijs, L. et al. *Tetrahedron* 1990, 46, 2611); ^1H NMR (CDCl_3) δ 1.73 (bs, 1H, NH), 3.04 (d, J=6.3Hz, 1H, CH), 3.50 (d, J=6.4Hz, 1H, CH), 3.52 (s, 3H, CH₃), 7.32-7.26 (m, 5H, aromatic); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3) δ 37.2, 40.2, 52.0, 127.3, 127.6, 128.0, 134.7, 160.3.

Example 8

Methyl (2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -3-isopropyl-1*H*-aziridine-2-carboxylate

The procedure of Example 7 was repeated, but (2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -*N*-(*p*-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine was replaced with (2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -*N*-(*p*-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-isopropylaziridine (prepared according to Example 4) to afford the titled compound (85%) as an oil:

$[\alpha]_D^{20} +50.2^\circ$ (c 2.9, CHCl_3); IR (KBr): 3265.6, 2960.2, 1734.4, 1208.1 cm^{-1} ; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3) δ 0.91 (d, J=6.7Hz, 3H), 1.11 (d, J=6.6Hz, 3H), 1.42-1.52 (m, 2H), 1.96-2.02 (m, 1H), 2.72 (d, J=6.3Hz, 1H), 3.77 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3) δ 171.2, 52.2, 45.5, 34.7, 28.0, 21.1, 20.4. Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_7\text{H}_{13}\text{NO}_2$: C, 58.72; H, 9.15. Found: C, 58.40; H, 8.86.

Example 9

Methyl (2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -2-amino-3-hydroxy-3-phenylpropanoate

Into a 50-mL round-bottomed flask equipped with a magnetic stir bar were placed 0.315 g (1.0 mmol) (2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -*N*-(*p*-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine (prepared according to Example 1), 10 mL acetonitrile and 2 mL 50% aqueous trifluoroacetic acid. The reaction mixture was stirred for 6 h at 45 °C, the solvent was removed and the residue treated with H_2O (5 mL). After washing the aqueous solution with ether (2 x 10 mL), the aqueous phase

was brought to pH 10 with concentrated NH_4OH and extracted with CHCl_3 (2 x 10 mL). After drying (MgSO_4), the organic phase was filtered and concentrated to give the titled compound in impure form, which was purified by flash chromatography (ether: CH_3CN : NH_4OH ; 10:1:0.2) to afford the

titled compound (0.138 g, 71%) as a viscous oil: $[\alpha]_D^{20}$

+11.0° (c 1.8, MeOH) ($[\alpha]_D^{20}$ -10.97° (c 1.4, MeOH)

according to Beulshausen, T. et al. *Liebigs Ann. Chem.* 1991, 1207 for the (2R,3S)-isomer); ^1H NMR (CDCl_3) δ 2.10 (bs, 3H, NH_2 , OH) 3.65 (d, $J=4.5\text{Hz}$, 1H, CH), 3.69 (s, 3H, CH_3), 4.91 (d, $J=4.5\text{Hz}$, 1H, CH) 7.36-7.26 (m, 5H, aromatic); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3) δ 52.2, 60.6, 74.1, 126.0, 127.8, 128.4, 140.9, 173.7.

15 Example 10

Methyl (2S,3R)-(-)-2-amino-3-chloro-3-phenylpropanoate hydrochloride

Into a 50-mL round-bottomed flask equipped with a magnetic stir bar were placed 0.315 g (1.0 mmol) (2S,3S)-(-)-N-(p-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine (prepared according to Example 1) and 10 mL freshly distilled methanol. The solution was cooled to 0 °C and 2 mL of 5N HCl were added dropwise. The reaction mixture was brought to room temperature and stirred for 1 h. The solvent was removed on a rotary evaporator, the residue was dissolved in 5 mL of H_2O and washed with ether (3x10 mL). The aqueous solution was concentrated on a rotary evaporator and dried overnight using a high vacuum pump to give the titled compound (0.178 g, 81%): mp 160-162 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20}$ -45.47° (c 1.7, MeOH); IR (KBr): 3300-2600, 1765, 1580, 1485, 1330, 1280, 1150, 1055 cm^{-1} ; ^1H NMR ($\text{DMSO}-d_6$) δ 3.52 (s, 3H, CH_3), 4.69 (d, $J=7.8\text{Hz}$, 1H, N-CH), 5.54 (d, $J=7.8\text{Hz}$, 1H, O-CH), 7.49-7.39 (m, 5H, aromatic), 9.15 (bs, 3H, NH);

^{13}C NMR ($\text{DMSO}-d_6$) δ 52.8, 58.2, 60.3, 127.6, 128.5, 129.2, 135.0, 166.0. Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_{13}\text{Cl}_2\text{NO}_2$: C, 48.02; H, 5.26. Found: C, 47.93; H, 5.30.

5 Example 11

11A. (2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -*N*-(*p*-Toluenesulfonyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine

Into a 25-mL single-necked round-bottomed flask equipped with a magnetic stir bar were placed 0.63 g (2.0 mmol) of (2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -*N*-(*p*-toluenesulfonyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine (prepared according to Example 1), 1.04 g (3.0 mmol) 3-chloroperoxybenzoic acid (60%, from Aldrich) and 20 mL chloroform. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 1 h, washed with 20 mL saturated aqueous $\text{Na}_2\text{S}_2\text{O}_3$ solution, diluted with 50 mL CH_2Cl_2 , washed with saturated aqueous Na_2CO_3 solution (2 x 10 mL) and dried (MgSO_4). Filtration and removal of the solvent gave a solid residue which was purified by flash chromatography (ethyl acetate:*n*-pentane, 2:8) to afford the titled compound (0.62 g, 94%): mp. 85-87 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20} +18.2^\circ$ (c 1.0, CHCl_3); IR (KBr): 3033.3, 1757.2, 1597.5, 1334.1, 1210.1, 1163.6, 1091.7 cm^{-1} ; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3) δ 2.44 (s, 3H, CH_3), 3.49 (s, 3H, CH_3), 3.71 (d, $J=7.7\text{Hz}$, 1H, CH), 4.12 (d, $J=7.6\text{Hz}$, 1H, CH), 7.20-7.32 (m, 5H, aromatic), 7.35 (d, $J=8.4\text{Hz}$, 2H, aromatic), 7.92 (d, $J=8.3\text{Hz}$, 2H, aromatic); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3) δ 164.5, 145.0, 133.8, 130.9, 129.7, 128.3, 128.0, 127.9, 127.2, 52.3, 45.3, 43.3, 21.6. Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{17}\text{NO}_4\text{S}$: C, 61.61; H, 5.17. Found: C, 61.43; H, 5.17.

11B. Methyl (2*S*,3*R*)-(-)-2-*N*-(*p*-toluenesulfonyl)amino-3-hydroxy-3-phenylpropionate

Into a 50-mL two-necked round-bottomed flask equipped with a magnetic stir bar, rubber septum and reflux condenser were placed 0.331 g (1.0 mmol) (2*S*,3*S*)-(+) -*N*-(*p*-

toluenesulfonyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine (prepared according to Example 11A), 6 mL dioxane, 4 mL water and 0.1 mL trifluoroacetic acid. The reaction mixture was stirred at 100 °C for 24 h, then cooled to room temperature, diluted with 25 mL ethyl acetate, washed with saturated aqueous NaHCO₃ solution (5 mL) and 5 mL brine. The organic phase was dried (MgSO₄), filtered and concentrated to give a white solid which was purified by flash chromatography (ethyl acetate:n-hexane, 50:50) to afford the titled compound (0.31 g, 89%) as an 84:16 mixture of syn:anti diastereomers.

Recrystallization from ethyl acetate afforded the purified syn diastereomer (0.21 g, 61%): mp 160-2 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20}$ -4.7° (c 0.94, MeOH); IR (KBr): 3600-3250, 1740 1334 1085 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 2.38 (s, 3H, CH₃), 3.50 (s, 3H, CH₃), 4.09 (dd, J= 4.0, 9.8Hz, 1H, N-CH), 5.02 (t, J=3.8Hz, 1H, O-CH), 5.34 (d, J=9.9Hz, 1H, NH), 7.16 (d, J=8.1Hz, 2H, aromatic), 7.27 (m, 5H, aromatic), 7.51 (d, J=8.2Hz, 2H, aromatic); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 21.6, 54.6, 61.9, 74.2, 126.0, 127.0, 128.2, 128.3, 129.4, 160.1, 182.3. Anal. Calcd for C₁₇H₁₉NO₅S: C, 58.43; H, 5.48. Found: C, 58.18; H, 5.38.

Example 12

12A. (2S,3S)-(+)-N-(p-Toluenesulfonyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-isopropylaziridine

Following the procedure of Example 11A, but replacing the (2S,3S)-(+)-N-(p-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-phenylaziridine with (2S,3S)-(+)-N-(p-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-isopropylaziridine (prepared according to Example 4), and performing the flash chromatography with ethyl acetate:n-pentane (2:8) as the eluent afforded the titled compound (0.565 g, 95%): mp 52-4 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20}$ -34.3° (c 1.2, CHCl₃); IR (KBr): 2963.9, 1755.8, 1597.5, 1209.6

1102.1, 1091.4 cm^{-1} ; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3) δ 0.84 (d, $J=6.6\text{Hz}$, 3H), 0.89 (d, $J=6.8\text{Hz}$, 3H), 1.57-1.68 (m, 1H), 2.45 (s, 3H), 2.68 (dd, $J=7.6\text{Hz}$, 9.9Hz, 1H), 3.45 (d, $J=7.44\text{Hz}$, 1H), 3.74 (s, 3H), 7.35 (d, $J=8.2\text{Hz}$, 2H), 7.86 (d, $J=8.3\text{Hz}$, 2H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3) δ 145.0, 134.0, 129.7, 128.3, 52.6, 50.8, 41.1, 26.7, 21.6, 20.5, 18.9. Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{19}\text{NO}_4\text{S}$: C, 56.55; H, 6.44. Found: C, 56.36; H, 6.63.

12B. Methyl (2*S*,3*R*)-(+)-2-*N*-(*p*-toluenesulfonyl)amino-3-formyloxy-4-methylpentanoate

Into a 50-mL two-necked round-bottomed flask equipped with a magnetic stir bar, rubber septum and a reflux condenser were placed 0.029 mg (0.1 mmol) (2*S*,3*S*)-(+)-*N*-(*p*-toluenesulfonyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-isopropylaziridine (prepared according to Example 12A) and 3 mL formic acid. The resulting mixture was stirred at 100 °C for 1.5 h and concentrated to give a solid which was purified by flash chromatography (ethyl acetate:pentane, 3:7), to afford the titled compound (0.021 g, 63%): mp 114-115 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20}$ +73.6° (c 1.3, CHCl_3); IR (KBr): 3339.2, 2956.8, 1749.4, 1724.1, 1597.0, 1168.9 1092.2 cm^{-1} ; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3) δ 0.92 (d, $J=6.7\text{Hz}$, 3H), 1.00 (d, $J=6.7\text{Hz}$, 3H), 2.10-2.20 (m, 1H), 2.42 (s, 3H), 3.44 (s, 3H), 4.22 (dd, $J=2.1\text{Hz}$, 6.8Hz, 1H), 5.00 (dd, $J=1.5\text{Hz}$, 9.5Hz, 1H), 5.19 (d, $J=10.7\text{Hz}$, 1H), 7.29 (d, $J=8.3\text{Hz}$, 2H), 7.70 (d, $J=8.3\text{Hz}$, 2H), 7.96 (s, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3) δ 169.8, 159.7, 143.9, 136.4, 129.6, 127.2, 77.9, 56.1, 52.8, 28.5, 21.5, 18.5, 18.1. Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{21}\text{NO}_6\text{S}$: C, 52.47; H, 6.16. Found: C, 52.13; H, 6.18.

Example 13

Preparation of thiamphenicol

13A. (+)-(S)-N-(4-Methylthiobenzylidene)-p-toluene-sulfinimine

Into an oven-dried 100 mL two-necked round-bottomed flask equipped with a magnetic stir bar, rubber septum, and argon-filled balloon were placed (1R,2S,5R)-(-)-menthyl-(S)-p-toluenesulfinate (2.94 g, 10 mmol) and THF (40 mL) cooled to -78 °C. Lithium bis(trimethyl)silylamide (1.0 M in THF, 15 mL, 15 mmol) was added via syringe, and stirring was maintained for 5 min. at -78 °C and for 5.5 h at room temperature. The solution was cooled to 0 °C, and 4-methylthiobenzaldehyde (2.7 mL, 20 mmol) was added via syringe followed by solid CsF (3.0 g, 20 mmol). After stirring for 8 h at room temperature, the solution was quenched with saturated aqueous NH₄Cl solution (10 mL), diluted with ethyl acetate (100 mL) and H₂O (50 mL). The aqueous phase was extracted with ethyl acetate (2 x 50 mL) and the combined organic phases were washed with H₂O (50 mL), brine (50 mL) and dried (MgSO₄). Removal of the solvent gave the crude sulfinimine which was purified by flash chromatography using ethyl acetate:n-hexane (3:7) as the eluent to give 2.3 g (80%) of the titled compound: mp 132-134 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20}$ -40.2° (c 1.1, CHCl₃); IR (KBr): 1587, 1548, 1495, 1405, 1089 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 2.39 (s, 3H), 2.50 (s, 3H), 7.25 (d, J=8.3Hz, 2H), 7.30 (d, J=8.3Hz, 2H), 7.62 (d, J=8.3Hz, 2H), 7.72 (d, J=8.3Hz, 2H), 8.68 (s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 159.3, 144.9, 141.5, 141.2, 129.8, 129.4, 124.9, 124.4, 21.2, 14.6; Anal. Calcd for C₁₅H₁₅NOS₂: C, 62.25; H, 5.22; Found: C, 62.48; H, 5.28.

13B. (2*S*,3*S*)-*N*-(*p*-Toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-(4-methylthiophenyl)aziridine

Into a 100-mL oven-dried two-necked round-bottomed flask fitted with a magnetic stir bar, rubber septum and an argon-filled balloon was placed lithium bis(trimethyl)silylamide (1.0 M in THF, 7.5 mL, 7.5 mmol) and THF (15 mL). The solution was cooled to -78 °C and methyl α -bromoacetate (0.71 mL, 7.5 mmol) was added via syringe. After stirring for 30 min. at -78 °C, a precooled solution (-78 °C) of (*S*)-(-)-*N*-(4-methylthiobenzylidene)-*p*-toluenesulfinimine (0.867, 3.0 mmol) in THF (15 mL) was added via cannula over 30 min. The reaction mixture was stirred for 3 h at -78 °C, quenched with water (3 mL) and diluted with ethyl acetate (100 mL). The organic phase was washed with brine (30 mL), dried (MgSO₄), filtered and concentrated to give the crude aziridine which was purified by flash chromatography using ethyl acetate:*n*-hexane (3:7) as the eluent to give 0.596 g (55%) of the titled compound: mp 86-88 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20}$ -2.3° (c 0.5, CHCl₃); IR (KBr): 1751, 1592, 1495, 1437, 1095 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 2.42 (s, 3H), 2.47 (s, 3H), 3.41 (s, 3H), 3.47 (d, J=7.3Hz, 1H), 3.82 (d, J=7.3Hz, 1H), 7.20 (d, J=8.2Hz, 2H), 7.33 (d, J=8.1Hz, 2H), 7.39 (d, J=8.2Hz, 2H), 7.70 (d, J=8.1Hz, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 166.1, 142.3, 140.8, 138.9, 129.8, 129.3, 128.3, 126.1, 125.2, 52.1, 41.9, 34.9, 21.5, 15.6.

13C. (2*S*,3*S*)-3-(4-Methylthiophenyl)-1*H*-aziridine-2-methanol

Into a 50-mL oven-dried two-necked round-bottomed flask fitted with a magnetic stir bar, rubber septum and an argon-filled balloon were placed (2*S*,3*S*)-*N*-(*p*-toluenesulfinyl)-2-carbomethoxy-3-(4-methylthiophenyl)aziridine (0.362 g, 1.0 mmol) and dry ether (10 mL). The solution was cooled to 0 °C, lithium aluminum hydride (0.113 g, 3.0 mmol) was added, the solution was warmed to room temperature, stirred for 1 h, and quenched with saturated aqueous NaHCO₃ solution (0.5

mL). The reaction mixture was diluted with ether (30 mL) and the resulting solid collected by filtration and washed with ether (3 x 40 mL). Concentration of the filtrate gave a light yellow solid which was triturated with ether (10 mL) and the resulting white crystals were collected by filtration to give 0.15 g of the titled compound, with an additional 0.020 g of the titled compound being recovered from the mother liquor, 0.17 g (87%): mp 125-125 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20} +96.8^\circ$ (c 0.7, CHCl₃); IR (KBr): 3258, 3140, 1600, 1496, 1039 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 1.84 (br, 2H), 2.48 (s, 3H), 2.64 (m, 1H), 3.25 (m, 1H), 3.44 (m, 2H), 7.24 (qAB, J=8.6Hz, 4H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 136.9, 133.5, 127.9, 126.3, 61.4, 37.8, 36.5, 16.0; Anal. Calcd for C₁₀H₁₃OS: C, 61.51; H, 6.71. Found: C, 61.25; H, 6.63.

13D. (2R,3R)-2-Amino-1-(4-methylthiophenyl)-1,3-propanediol
Into a 15 mL two-necked round-bottomed flask fitted with a magnetic stir bar were placed (2S,3S)-3-(4-methylthiophenyl)-1H-aziridine-2-methanol (0.050 g, 0.256 mmol), THF (1 mL) and water (1 mL). p-Toluenesulfonic acid (0.051 g, 0.269 mmol) was added and the reaction mixture stirred for 30 min. at room temperature. Removal of the solvent gave a residue that was dissolved in water (5 mL), brought to pH 12 by addition of aqueous NaOH (50%) and extracted with CH₂Cl₂ (4 x 30 mL). The combined organic phases were dried (Na₂SO₄) and concentrated to gave 0.050 g (93%) of the titled compound as white crystals: mp 148-150 °C (149-151 °C according to Clark, J. E. et al. *Synthesis* 1991, 891); $[\alpha]_D^{20} -20.9^\circ$ (c 1.2, EtOH), ($[\alpha]_D^{20} -21^\circ$ (c 2.5, EtOH) according to Clark, J. E. et al. *Synthesis* 1991, 891); ¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆) δ 2.46 (s, 3H), 2.67 (m, 1H), 3.12 (m, 1H), 3.30 (m, 1H), 3.32 (m, 4H), 4.41 (d, J=5.8Hz, 1H), 7.23 (qAB, J=8.4Hz, 4H).

13E. (2R,3R)-2-N-(Dichloroacetamido)-1-(4-methylthiophenyl)-1,3-propanediol

Into a 25-mL oven-dried two-necked round-bottomed flask fitted with a magnetic stir bar, rubber septum and an argon-filled balloon were placed (2R,3R)-2-amino-1-(4-methylthiophenyl)-1,3-propanediol (0.039 g, 0.183 mmol), triethylamine (0.08 mL, 0.549 mmol) and dry THF (5 mL). The solution was cooled to 0 °C and dichloroacetyl chloride (0.38 mL, 0.5 M in THF, 0.192 mmol) was added via syringe.

The reaction mixture was stirred for 2.5 h, quenched with saturated aqueous NaHCO₃ solution (5 mL), diluted with CH₂Cl₂ (50 mL) and the organic phase washed with water (10 mL) and dried (Na₂SO₄) and filtered. Concentration of the filtrate gave 0.55 g (93%) of the titled compound as a white crystalline solid: mp 111-113 °C (111.6-112.6 °C according to Cutler, R. A., et al. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 1952, 74, 5475); $[\alpha]_D^{20} +11.5^\circ$ (c, 1.3, EtOH) ($[\alpha]_D^{20} +12^\circ$ (c, 1.0, EtOH),

according to Cutler, R. A., et al. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 1952, 74, 5475); ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 2.19 (br, 1H), 2.48 (s, 3H), 2.90 (br, 1H), 3.92 (m, 2H), 4.08 (m, 1H), 5.13 (d, J=3.0Hz, 1H), 5.85 (s, 1H), 7.27 (qAB, J=8.4Hz, 4H).

13F. Thiamphenicol

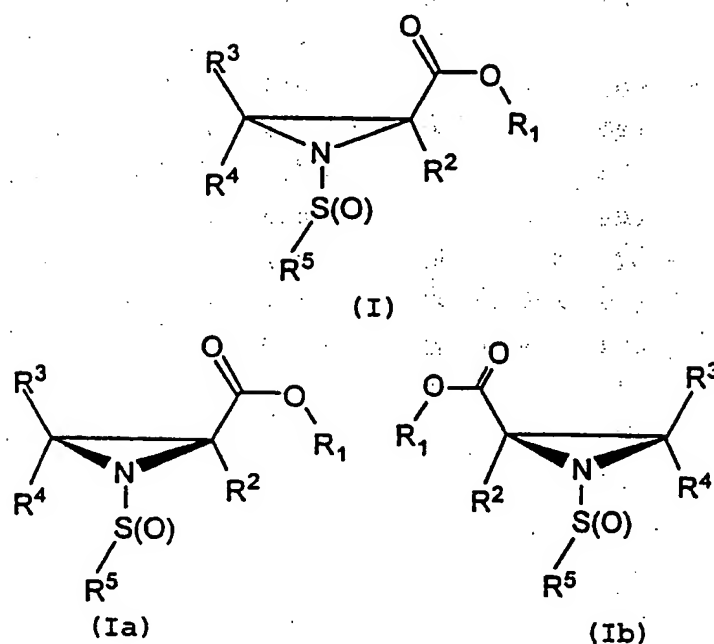
Into a 10 mL single-necked round-bottomed flask fitted with a magnetic stir bar were placed (2R,3R)-2-N-(dichloroacetamido)-1-(4-methylthiophenyl)-1,3-propanediol (0.016 g, 0.048 mmol), dry THF (3 mL) and 95% m-chloroperoxybenzoic acid (0.023 g, 0.012 mmol). The solution was stirred for 1.5 h at room temperature, quenched with saturated aqueous Na₂S₂O₃ solution (5 mL), diluted with CH₂Cl₂ (50 mL) and the organic phase washed with saturated aqueous Na₂CO₃ solution (2 x 5 mL), dried (Na₂SO₄) and filtered. Concentration of the filtrate gave 0.016 g (95%) of the titled compound as a white solid: mp 164-166 °C, (164.3-166.3 °C according to Cutler, R. A., et al. *J. Am.*

Chem. Soc. 1952, 74, 5475); $[\alpha]_D^{20} +12.5^\circ$ (c, 0.9, EtOH),
5 $([\alpha]_D^{20} +12.9^\circ$ (c 1.0, EtOH) according to Cutler, R. A., et
al. J. Am. Chem. Soc. 1952, 74, 5475); ^1H NMR (DMSO- d_6) d
3.15 (s, 3H), 3.28-3.58 (m, 3H), 3.90 (m, 1H), 4.99 (d,
J=2.4Hz, 1H), 6.47 (s, 1H), 7.56 (d, J=8.4Hz, 2H), 7.83 (d,
J=8.4Hz, 2H), 8.32 (d, J=8.9Hz, 1H).

It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that
changes could be made to the embodiments described above
without departing from the broad inventive concept thereof.
10 It is understood, therefore, that this invention is not
limited to the particular embodiments disclosed, but it is
intended to cover modifications within the spirit and scope
of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

Claims

1. A 2-carboxy-1-sulfinylaziridine compound of general formula (I), including the isomers (Ia) or (Ib) and salts thereof



wherein R¹, R², R³, R⁴ and R⁵ are independently selected from the group of radicals consisting of hydrogen and hydrocarbon radicals, wherein each of said hydrocarbon radicals independently has from 1 to 40 carbon atoms, 0-40 halogen atoms, and 0-10 heteroatoms selected from the group consisting of boron, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorous, silicon and selenium, with the proviso that R³ and R⁴ are not simultaneously hydrogen, and S(O) represents a sulfinyl group in either racemic or optically enriched form.

2. A compound according to claim 1 wherein the hydrocarbon radical having from 1 to 40 carbon atoms is selected from the group consisting of aliphatic radicals, aromatic radicals and combinations thereof, where an

aliphatic radical includes acyclic and alicyclic radicals, where the acyclic radical includes straight- and branched-chain acyclic radicals, where the alicyclic radical includes bicyclic and other polycyclic radicals, and where the
5 aliphatic or aromatic radical contains 0-10 heteroatoms and 0-40 halogen atoms.

3. A compound according to claim 2 wherein the hydrocarbon radical is a member selected from the group
10 consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, bicyclo[2.2.1]heptyl, C₁-C₁₀ alkyl, C₁-C₁₀ alkenyl, C₃-C₁₀ cycloalkyl, oxazolidyl, pyridyl, pyrazyl, cholesteryl and diacetone-D-glucose, wherein any selected member may be substituted with 0-7
substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen,
15 nitro, carbonyl, C₁-C₅ alkoxy, C₁-C₅ alkyl, hydroxy, phenyl, naphthyl, C₁-C₅ alkylthio, C₁-C₅ alkylsulfonyl and benzyloxy.

4. A compound according to claim 3 wherein R² and R⁴
20 are hydrogen.

5. A compound according to claim 4 wherein R¹ is C₁-C₁₀ alkyl, R³ is a member selected from the group consisting of phenyl, bicyclo[2.2.1]heptyl, C₁-C₅ alkyl and C₁-C₅
25 alkenyl, and wherein the selected member is substituted with 0-5 substituents selected from the group consisting of C₁-C₅ alkyl, halogen and nitro.

6. A compound according to claim 2 wherein at least
30 one of R², R³ or R⁴ is hydrogen.

7. A compound according to claim 2 wherein either R³ or R⁴ is hydrogen and the other of R⁴ or R³ is an aliphatic radical having 1 to 40 carbon atoms containing 0-10 heteroatoms and 0-40 halogen atoms.

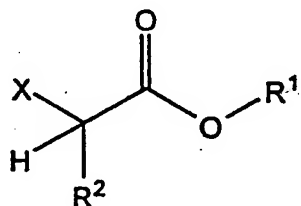
5

8. A compound according to claim 2 wherein either R³ or R⁴ is hydrogen and the other of R⁴ or R³ is an aromatic radical substituted with 0-5 C₁-C₈ aliphatic radicals, where the aliphatic radical and aromatic radical can together
10 contain 0-10 heteroatoms and 0-40 halogen atoms.

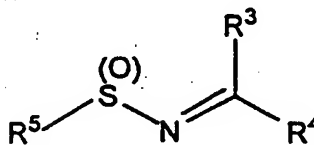
9. A compound according to claim 7 wherein R² is hydrogen.

15 10. A compound according to claim 8 wherein R² is hydrogen.

11. A process for preparing a compound according to claim 1 comprising reacting a compound of formula (II) with
20 base to form a reactive intermediate, and then reacting the reactive intermediate with a compound of formula (III), wherein the compounds of formulas (II) and (III) have the structures,



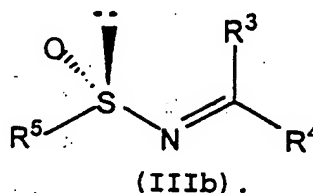
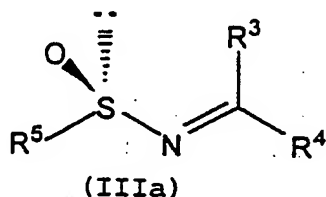
(II)



(III)

wherein X is a leaving group including halogen and sulfonate esters such as mesylate and tosylate, and R¹, R², R³, R⁴ and R⁵ are as defined for compounds of formula (I), and S(O)
30 represents a sulfinyl group in either racemic or optically enriched form.

12. The process according to claim 11 wherein the compound of formula (III) has the structure represented by formula (IIIa) or formula (IIIb)



13. The process according to claim 11 wherein the reactive intermediate is the enolate of the compound of formula (II) having either 'E' or 'Z' geometry.

10

14. The process according to claim 11 wherein the base is selected from the group consisting of lithium, sodium or potassium hydride; lithium, sodium or potassium salts of primary, secondary or tertiary amines; sodium amide; lithium alkyls; and metal salts of organic alcohols.

15

15. A process comprising treating a compound according to claim 1 with acid or base.

20

16. The process according to claim 15 wherein the acid is selected from the group consisting of trifluoroacetic acid; hydrochloric acid; sulfuric acid; formic acid; acetic acid; alkyl-, aryl-, alkylaryl- or arylalkyl-sulfonic acid; and acidic ion exchange resins.

25

17. The process according to claim 16 wherein the acid is trifluoroacetic acid or para-toluenesulfonic acid.

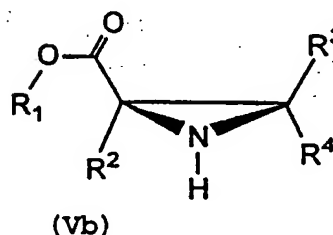
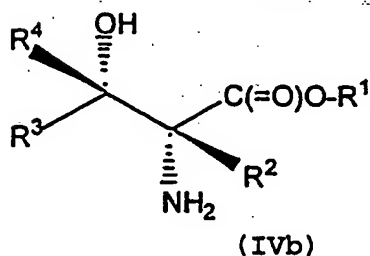
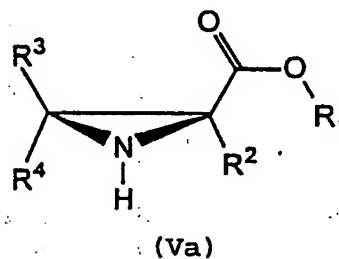
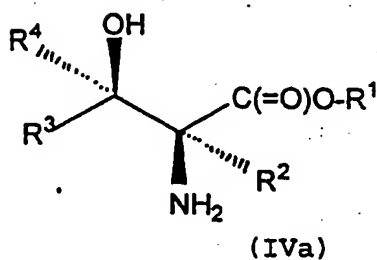
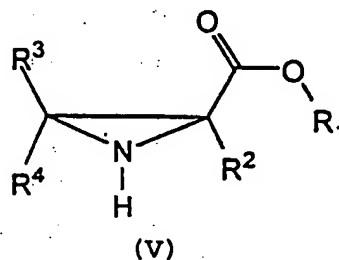
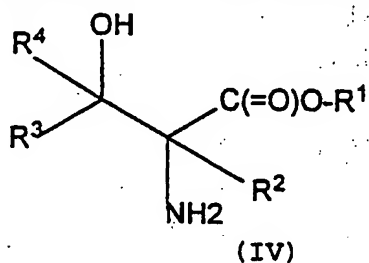
18. The process according to claim 15 wherein the base is selected from the group consisting of lithium hydroxide; potassium hydroxide; sodium hydroxide; ammonium hydroxide;

30

primary, secondary and tertiary amines; tetrabutylammonium hydroxide, and basic ion exchange resins.

19. The process according to claim 18 wherein the base
5 is sodium hydroxide or an amine.

20. The process according to claim 15 wherein the
product of said process comprises a member selected from the
group consisting of compounds of formulas (IV), (IVa),
10 (IVb), (V), (Va) and (Vb), wherein said compounds are
represented by the structures



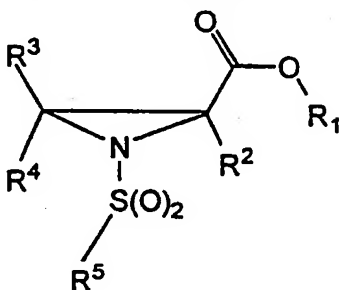
and R¹, R², R³ and R⁴ are defined as for compounds of
20 formula (I).

21. A process comprising treating a compound according
to claim 1 with an oxidizing agent.

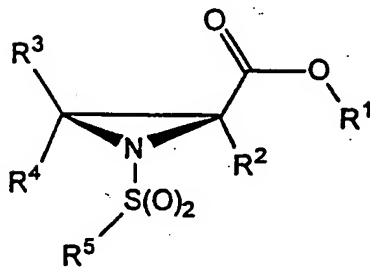
22. The process according to claim 21 wherein the oxidizing agent is selected from the group consisting of meta-chloroperoxybenzoic acid, hydrogen peroxide, peroxyacetic acid, monoperoxyphthalic acid, magnesium salt hydrate, selenium dioxide-hydrogen peroxide, potassium peroxymonopersulfate, chromic acid, potassium permanganate, sodium periodate with catalytic potassium permanganate, tert-butylhypochlorite and N-sulfonyloxaziridines.

23. The process according to claim 21 wherein the oxidizing agent is meta-chloroperoxybenzoic acid.

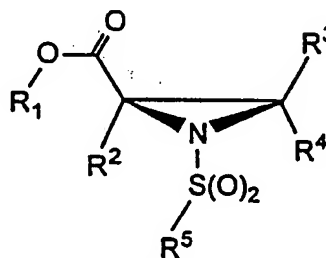
24. The process according to claim 21 wherein the product of said process provides a compound of formula (VI), or its isomers, compounds of formula (VIa) and (VIb)



(VI)



(VIa)



(VIb)

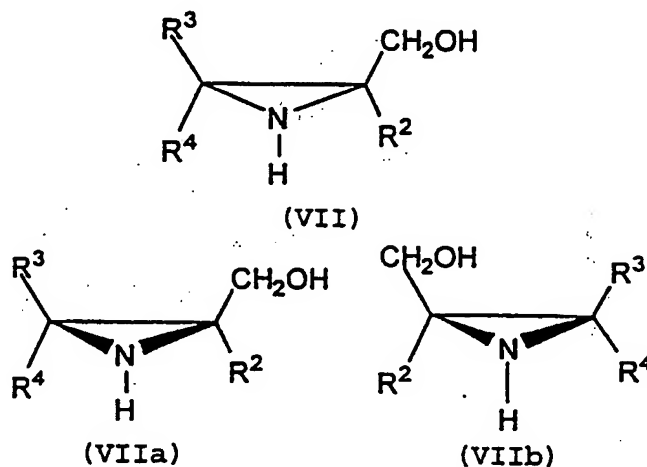
wherein R¹, R², R³, R⁴ and R⁵ are defined as for compounds of formula (I).

25. A process comprising treating a compound according to claim 1 with a reducing agent.

26. The process according to claim 25 wherein the reducing agent is selected from the group consisting of lithium aluminum hydride, sodium borohydride, lithium borohydride, diisobutylaluminum hydride, sodium cyanoborohydride, sodium bis(2-methoxyethoxy)aluminum hydride, calcium borohydride, lithium tri-tert-butoxy hydride, diborane, reducing metal solutions such as lithium/sodium, and hydrogenation techniques.

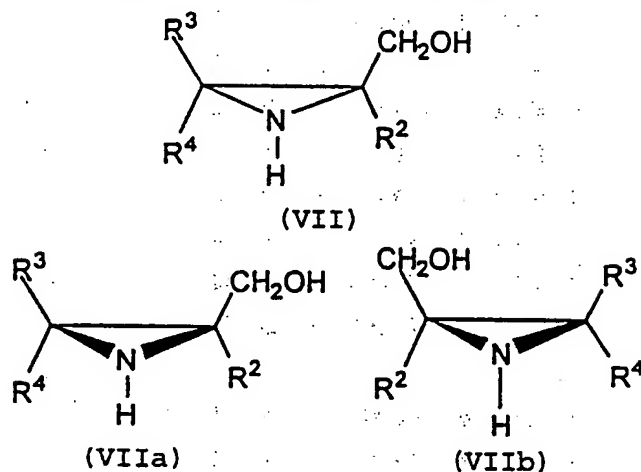
27. The process according to claim 25 wherein the reducing agent is lithium aluminum hydride.

28. The process according to claim 25 wherein a product of said process is a compound of formula (VII), or its isomers, a compound of formula (VIIa) or (VIIb)



wherein R², R³ and R⁴ are defined as for compounds of formula (I).

29. A compound of general formula (VII), including the optically active isomers (VIIa) or (VIIb)



10 wherein R^2 , R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from the group of radicals consisting of hydrogen and hydrocarbon radicals, wherein each of said hydrocarbon radical independently has from 1 to 40 carbon atoms, 0-40 halogen atoms, and 0-10 heteroatoms selected from the group

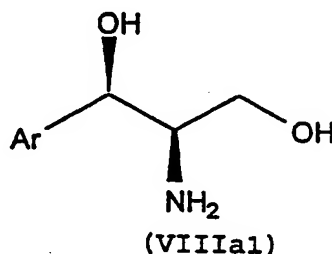
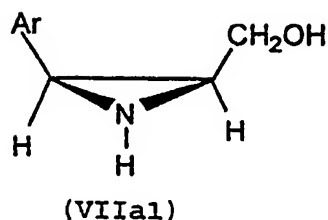
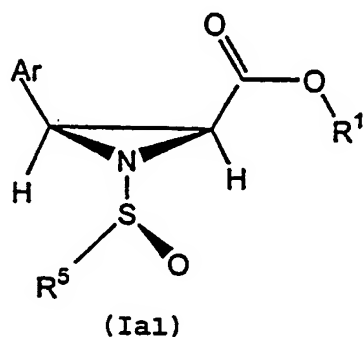
15 consisting of boron, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorous, silicon and selenium, with the proviso that when R^2 is hydrogen, neither R^3 nor R^4 is hydrogen.

30. A compound according to claim 29 wherein the

20 hydrocarbon radical having from 1 to 40 carbon atoms is selected from the group of radicals consisting of aliphatic radicals, aromatic radicals and combinations thereof, where an aliphatic radical includes acyclic and alicyclic radicals, where the acyclic radical includes straight- and

25 branched-chain acyclic radicals, where the alicyclic radical includes bicyclic and other polycyclic radicals; and where the aliphatic or aromatic radical contains 0-10 heteroatoms and 0-40 halogen atoms.

31. A method for synthesizing florfenicol, thiamphenicol or chloramphenicol comprising the steps of
 5 reacting a compound of formula (Ia1) with a reducing agent to provide a compound of formula (VIIa1), and treating the compound of formula (VIIa1) with acid or base to provide a compound of formula (VIIIa1), and converting a compound of formula (VIIIa1) to florfenicol, thiamphenicol or
 10 chloramphenicol, wherein the compounds of formulas (Ia1), (VIIa1) and (VIIIa1) have the formulas



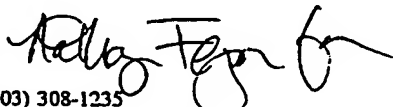
wherein Ar represents $\text{para-CH}_3\text{S(=O)}_2\text{-C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-}$ or a precursor thereof, when either florfenicol or thiamphenicol is being synthesized, and Ar represents $\text{para-NO}_2\text{-C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-}$ or a precursor thereof when chloramphenicol is being synthesized, and R^1 and R^5 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrocarbon radicals having from 1 to 40 carbon atoms, 0-
 20 40 halogen atoms, and 0-10 heteroatoms selected from the
 25

group consisting of boron, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorous, silicon and selenium.

32. The method according to claim 31 wherein the
5 reducing agent is lithium aluminum hydride and the acid is trifluoroacetic acid.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US95/04911

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC(6) : C07D 401/04, 403/04, 203/02, 203/22 US CL : 546/275; 548/364.1, 965 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) U.S. : 546/275; 548/364.1, 965 Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) CAS Online		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	Tetrahedron Letters, Vol. 32, No. 1, issued 1991, G. Cainelli, et al., "Studies on N-Mettallo Imines: Synthesis of N-Unsubstituted Aziridines From N-Trimethylsilyl Imines and Lithium Enolates of α -Halo Esters," pages 121-124, see reaction schemes 1 and 2a.	11-20
X	DE, A, 2,948,832 (BERGER ET AL.) 11 June 1981, see entire document.	1-10
----		-----
Y		20-24
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.		
* Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "Z" document member of the same patent family		
Date of the actual completion of the international search 26 JULY 1995		Date of mailing of the international search report 15 SEP 1995
Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks Box PCT Washington, D.C. 20231 Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230		Authorized officer Jacqueline Haley  Telephone No. (703) 308-1235

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US95/04911

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	J. Chem. Soc. Perkin Trans. I, issued 1986, A. Bongini et al., "Iodocyclofunctionalization of (Z)-1-Trichloroacetimidoyloxyalk-2-enes and 3-Trichloroacetimidoyloxyalk-1-enes, Synthesis of (\pm)- <i>erythro</i> -Sphinganine Triacetate and (\pm)- <i>threo</i> -Sphinganine Triacetate," pages 1339-1344, see formula (11).	28-30
X,P	J. Organic Chem., Vol. 59, No. 12, issued 17 June 1994, F. A. Davis, et al., "Asymmetric Synthesis and Reactions of <i>cis</i> -N-(<i>p</i> -Toluenesulfinyl)aziridine-2-carboxylic Acids," pages 3243-3245, see entire document.	1-10
X	Tetrahedron Letters, Vol. 34, No. 39, issued 1993, F.A. Davis et al, "Asymmetric Synthesis of Sulfinimines: Chiral Ammonia Imine Synthons," pages 6229-6232, see entire document.	1-30

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US95/04911

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This international report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

Please See Extra Sheet.

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☒ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
1-30
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

☒
☐

The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US95/04911

BOX II. OBSERVATIONS WHERE UNITY OF INVENTION WAS LACKING

This ISA found multiple inventions as follows:

- I. Claims 1-20 drawn to carboxy-1-sulfonylaziridine compounds and a process for preparing them and a first method of use.
- II. Claims 21-24 drawn to carboxy-1-sulfonylaziridine compounds and a process for preparing the same.
- III. Claims 25-28 drawn to hydroxyalkylaziridines and a process for preparing the same.
- IV. Claims 29-30 drawn to a product produced by the process of Group II.
- V. Claims 31-32 drawn to a process for preparing florenicol, thiamphenicol or chloramphenicol.

The inventions listed as Groups I-VI do not relate to a single inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons:

These groups are directed to products materially different from the product claimed in group I. The processes for making these products are materially different, and thus the claims are not so linked by a special technical feature within the meaning of PCT Rule 13.2 so as to form a single inventive concept.

NOTIFICATION OF DECISION CONCERNING PROTEST

International application No.
PCT/US95/04911

Applicant's Protest of the Holding of Lack of Unity of Invention has been denied for the following reasons:

The applicants' protest of the finding of a lack of unity by the ISA has been considered, but is not found persuasive. Initially, it must be pointed that the protest can only be for inventions actually paid for by the applicant, PCT Rule 40.2(c); therefore, the protest will only be considered as it relates to groups I-IV.

The applicants' assertion that the claims contain a common special technical feature, i.e., "certain aziridine compounds." This cannot be the special technical feature since PCT Rule 13.2 states:

"The expression 'special technical feature' shall mean those technical features that define a contribution which each of the claimed inventions, considered as a whole, makes over the prior art."

In the instant application, it can be seen that the Cainelli et al, Bongini et al, Davis et al and Berger et al teach that "certain aziridine compounds" of the groups I-IV are well known in the art, and as such do not make a contribution over the prior art.

The grouping of inventions (set out below) is proper:

I. Claims 1-20 drawn to carboxy-1-sulfinylaziridine compounds and a process for preparing them and a first method of use.

II. Claims 21-24 drawn to carboxy-1-sulfonylaziridine compounds and a process for preparing the same.

III. Claims 25-28 drawn to hydroxyalkylaziridines and a process for preparing the same.

IV. Claims 29-30 drawn to a product produced by the process of Group II.

V. Claims 31-32 drawn to a process for preparing florenicol, thiamphenicol or chloramphenicol.